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THE STATUE.

*Price Three Shillings.*



# EVADNE;

OR,

## THE STATUE:

*A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS:*

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

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BY RICHARD SHEIL, Esq.



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1819.

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TO  
**THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.**  
IN TESTIMONY OF  
THE AUTHOR'S SENSE OF THE  
GENIUS, PATRIOTISM, AND PRIVATE WORTH,  
OF THAT ILLUSTRIOUS POET,  
AND OF  
HIS GRATITUDE FOR MUCH PERSONAL KINDNESS  
TOWARDS HIMSELF,  
THIS TRAGEDY IS INSCRIBED.

100 - 1000 M. above sea level

of the mountainous areas.

It is a very large tree

and has a very large trunk.

It is a very tall tree

and has a very large trunk.

It is a very tall tree

and has a very large trunk.

It is a very tall tree

and has a very large trunk.

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## PREFACE.

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THE Author has employed a part of the fable of SHIRLEY's "*Traytor*", in the construction of his plot. In that tragedy, a kinsman, and favourite of the Duke of Florence, contrives to excite in him a dishonourable passion for the sister of a Florentine nobleman, as the means of procuring the murder of the Duke by the hand of the injured brother, and thus opening the way for his own elevation to the throne.

To that extent only the plot of this tragedy is derived from SHIRLEY. The incidents, situations, distribution, characters, and language, (such as they are), the Author hopes he may be pardoned for observing, are his own. It will, perhaps, be thought, that this detracts from his claim to the merit of originality—He does not think so.—No one contests the originality of *Douglas*, because HOME took his plot from an old ballad,

and even profited by the *Merope* of VOLTAIRE.—  
ROWE's *Fair Penitent* is a still stronger case; that fine tragedy is modelled on MASSINGER'S *Fatal Dowry*;—OTWAY and SOUTHERNE rarely invented their plots.

The Author trusts his introduction of these names will not be misinterpreted. He mentions them for the purpose of justifying himself, by the authority of their example.

## PROLOGUE,

*SPOKEN BY MR. EGERTON.*

---

WHEN erst in Eden's solitary bowers,  
The primal Man beheld his world of flowers,  
Eternal sunshine tinged the glorious sky,  
Alternate beauties wooed his wandering eye;  
While infant Love, waving its odorous wing,  
Woke the wild spirit of the breathing Spring.  
Yet still through Paradise he restless strayed,  
Its bower was songless, and its sun was shade;  
E'en as the Bard of Albany \* has sung,  
In strains that live for age, and yet are young,  
Creation bloom'd, a decorated wild,—  
It was not Paradise—till Woman smiled.  
Fair on his view the Paragon arose,  
Source of his bliss, and solace of his woes.  
By bounteous Heaven ordain'd to sooth his fall,  
And sole survive, a recompense for all.  
Who has not felt her chaste and charmed power  
Beguile his sad, and raise his raptur'd hour?  
If such there be—Oh! let him bend his sight  
Far from the hallowed vision of to-night.  
To-night, our Bard, in lovely woman's cause,  
Alone from manly bosoms asks applause;  
From British bosoms asks, without a fear,  
Assured that such a cause is sacred here.

\* Albany was the ancient name of Scotland.—CAMPBELL.

PROLOGUE.

And you, ye Fair, see young *Evadne* prove  
Her vestal honour, and her plighted love ;  
See her, the light and joy of every eye,  
Veil all her charms in spotless chastity ;  
And, 'mid the fires and phantasies of youth,  
Turn strong temptations to the cause of truth !  
Oh ! may each maid *Evadne's* virtue share,  
With heart as faithful, though with form less fair.  
You, too, who hope Ambition's height to climb,  
Toiling to fortune through the maze of crime,  
Behold, as in the daring " fool of Crete."  
Of such design, the lesson, and the fate :  
Behold the wing that lifts it to the skies  
Melt in the sun to which it sought to rise.  
Such is the strain by which the moral Bard  
Seeks from a moral people his reward :  
Seeks in simplicity, without one aid  
From scenic pomp, or pasteboard cavalcade.  
Britons, be just, and as our " Statue" stands,  
Like *MEMNON*'s image from its master's hands,  
With one bright ray illume the sculptured toil,  
And bid it breathe—the creature of your smile.

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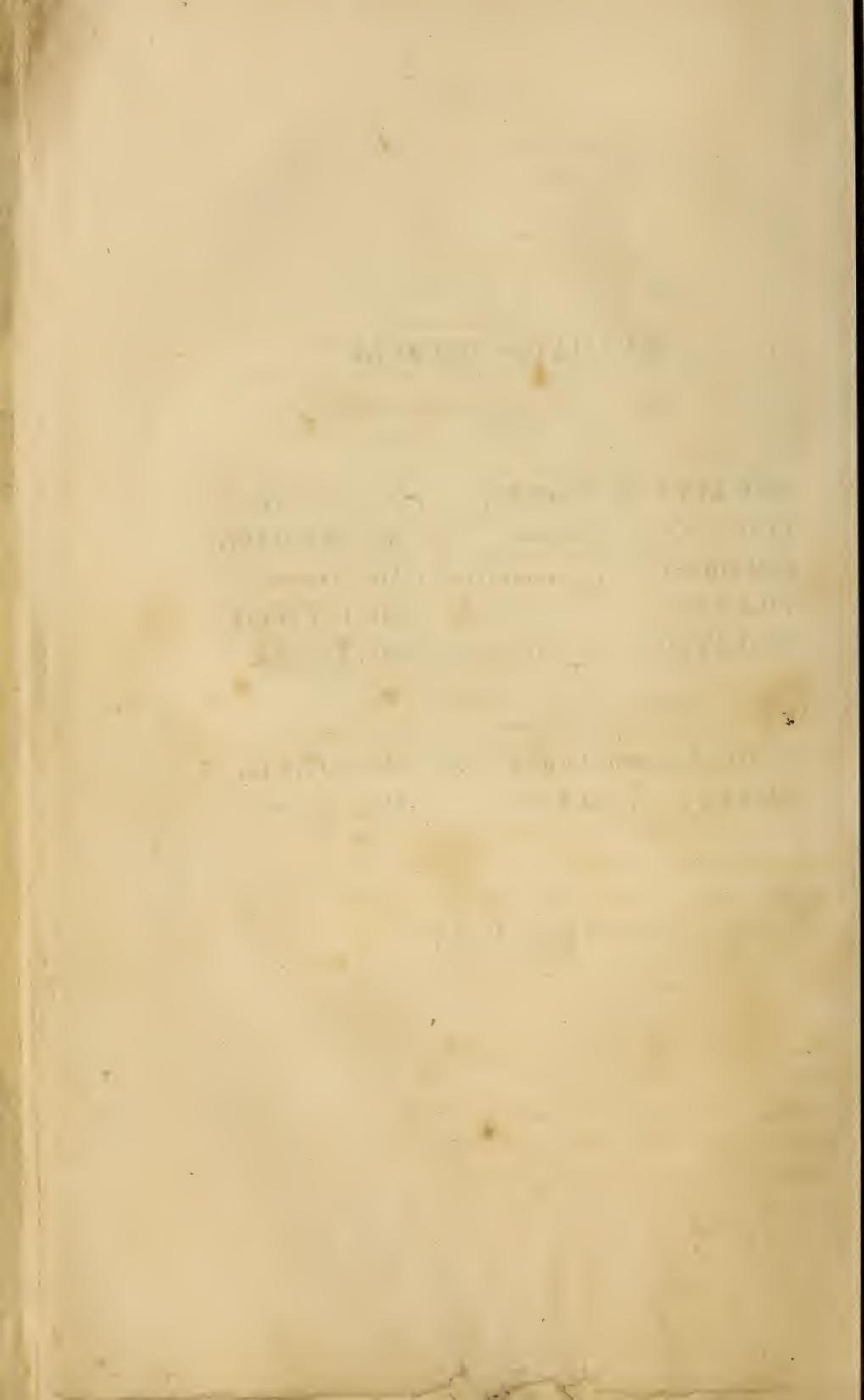
## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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THE KING OF NAPLES, ..... MR. ABBOTT.  
LUDOVICO, *his Favourite* ..... MR. M'CREADY.  
COLONNA, ..... MR. YOUNG.  
VICENTIO, ..... MR. C. KEMBLE.  
SPALATRO, ..... MR. CONNOR,

EVADNE, *sister of Colonna* ..... MISS O'NEILL.  
OLIVIA, *in love with Vicentio* ..... MRS. FAUCIT.

*Scene—Naples.*



# EVADNE,

OR,

**T H E S T A T U E.**

---

## A C T I.

### SCENE I.

*The Palace of the King of Naples.*

*Enter the KING, SPALATRO, and Courtiers.*

KING. DIDST say the Marquis of Colonna prays  
Admission to our presence?

SPAL. Aye, my liege,  
He stands in the anti-chamber, with a brow  
As stern as e'er was knitted in the folds  
Of ranc'rous discontent.

KING. I have noted oft  
His absence from the court, the which I deem  
His envy of our true Ludovico.

SPAL. Deem it no little benefit, my liege;  
His deep and murky smile, his gather'd arms,  
In whose close pride he folds himself—his raw

And pithy apothegms of scorn have made him  
 Our laughter, and our hatred; we are all  
 Grown weary of this new Diogenes,  
 Who rolls his hard and new philosophy  
 Against all innocent usage of the court.

**KING.** We must not bid him hence—he has a sister—

**SPAL.** The fair Evadne!—

**KING.** Fairer than the morn;  
 Who has not seen her, knows of beauty less  
 Than blind men of Aurora.—For her sake  
 We give him ample scope, and we are glad  
 He comes to visit us.

**COLONNA** without.

**COL.** I'll hear no more.

Colonna does not often importune  
 With his unwelcome presence. Let me pass—  
 For once I must be heard.

*Enter COLONNA, followed by Courtiers.*

My liege!—

**1st. COURT.** Hold back!

**2d. COURT.** What right hast thou to rush before the sight  
 Of sacred royalty?

**COL.** The right that all  
 Good subjects ought to have—to do him service.

My liege—

**KING.** You are welcome—  
 And would you had brought your lovely sister too.

**COL.** My sister, did you say? My sister, sir?  
 She is not fit for courts; she would be called  
 (For she has something left of nature still)  
 A simple creature here; she cannot cast  
 Unholy glances from a sidelong eye,

Or give her untouched body to the wreath  
Of mazy dances, where all decency  
Is lost in pleasure's wildered labyrinth.  
She is not fit for courts, and I have hope  
She never will: But, let it pass—I come  
To implore a favour of you.

KING. Whatsoe'er  
Colonna prays, sure cannot be refus'd.

COL. The favour that I ask is one, my liege,  
That princes often find it hard to grant.  
'Tis simply this—that you will hear the truth.

KING. Proceed, and play the monitor, my lord.  
COL. I see your courtiers here do stand amazed.  
Of them I first would speak—There is not one  
Of this wide troop of glittering parasites,  
That circle you, as priests surround their God,  
With sycophantic incense, but in soul  
Is your base foe.—These smilers here, my liege,—  
Whose dimples seem a sort of honeycomb  
Filled, and o'erflowing with suavity—  
These soft melodious flatterers, my liege,  
That flourish on the flexibility  
Of their soft countenances, are the vermin  
That haunt a prince's ear with the false buzz  
Of villainous assentation.—These are they  
Who from your mind have flouted every thought  
Of the great weal of the people.—These are they  
Who from your ears have shut the public cry,  
And with the poisoned gales of flattery  
Create around you a foul atmosphere  
Of unresounding denseness, thro' the which  
Their loud complaints cannot reverberate,  
And perish ere they reach you.

KING. Who complains,—  
Who dares complain of us?

COL. All dare complain  
Behind you—I before you.—Do not think  
Because you load your people with the weight  
Of camels, they possess the camel's patience.  
A deep groan labours in the nation's heart;  
The very calm and stillness of the day  
Gives augury of the earthquake.—All without  
Is as the marble smooth, and all within  
Is rotten as the carcase it contains;  
Tho' ruin knock not at the palace-gate,  
Yet will the palace-gate unfold itself  
To ruin's felt-shod tread.

KING. (*aside.*) Insolent villain!

COL. Your gorgeous banquets—your high feasts of gold,  
Which the four quarters of the rifled world  
Heap with their ravish'd luxuries—your pomps,  
Your palaces, and all the sumptuousness  
Of painted royalty will melt away,  
As in a theatre the glittering scene  
Doth vanish with the shifter's magic hand,  
And the mock pageant perishes.—My liege,  
A single virtuous action hath more worth  
Than all the pyramids, and glory writes  
A more enduring epitaph upon  
One generous deed, than the sarcophagus  
In which Sesostris meant to sleep.

SPAL. Forbear!

It is a subject's duty to arrest  
Thy rash and blasphemous speech.—

KING. Let him speak on—  
The monarch who can listen to Colonna,  
Is not the worthless tyrant he would make me.

COL. I deem you not that tyrant—if I did—  
No! Nature framing you, did kindly mean,  
And o'er your heart hath sprinkled many drops  
Of her best charities. But you are led  
From virtue and from wisdom far away,  
By men whose every look 's a lie—whose hearts  
Are a large heap of cankers, and of whom  
The chief is a rank traitor!

KING. Traitor! whom meanest thou?

COL. Your favourite, your minister, my liege.  
That smooth-faced hypocrite—that—

KING. Here he comes!

COL. It is the traitor's self—I am glad of it,  
That to his face I may confront.

*Enter LUDOVICO—he advances rapidly to the King.*

LUD. My liege,  
I hasten to your presence, to inform you—  
Colonna here! (*starting.*)

COL. The same—Colonna's here!  
And if you wish to learn his theme of speech,  
Learn that he spoke of treason and of you.

LUD. Did I not stand before the hallowed eye  
Of majesty, I would teach thee with my sword  
How to reform thy phrase—But I am now  
In my king's presence, and with awe-struck soul,  
As if within Religion's peaceful shrine,  
Humbly I bend before him. What, my liege,  
Hath this professor of austerity,  
And practiser of slander, vomited  
Against your servant's honour?

KING. He hath called you—

COL. A traitor! and I warn you to beware  
Of the false viper nurtured in your heart.

He has filled the city with a band of men,  
 By fell allegiance sworn unto himself.  
 There are a thousand ruffians at his word  
 Prepared to cut our throats.—The city swarms  
 With murderers' faces, and tho' treason now  
 Moves like a muffled dwarf, 'twill speedily  
 Swell to a blood-robed giant!—If, my liege,  
 What I have said doth not unfilm your eye,  
 'Twere vain to tell you more.—“ And I desire not  
 “ To hear a traitor doling out before you  
 “ His fluent protestation, till at last  
 “ With insolent mockery of attested Heaven,  
 “ From the believing ear of royalty,  
 “ He suck its brains out.”—I have said, my liege,  
 And tried to interrupt security  
 Upon her purple cushion—he, perhaps,  
 Will find some drowsy syrup to lay down  
 Her opening eye-lids into sleep again,  
 And call back slumber with a lullaby  
 Of sweetest adulation.—Fare you well !

LUD. Hold back !

COL. Not for your summons, my good lord.  
 The courtly air doth not agree with me,  
 And I respire it painfully.—My lord,  
 Hear my last words.—Beware, Ludovico !

LUD. Villain, come back !

COL. I wear a sword, my lord.

[*Exit.*

LUD. He flies before me—and the sight of him  
 He dares accuse, came like the morning sun  
 On the night-walking enemy of mankind,  
 That shrinks before the day-light—yes, he fled,  
 And I would straight pursue him, and send back,  
 On my sword's point, his falsehoods to his heart—

But that I here before the assembled court  
Would vindicate myself—a traitor!—who  
In any action of Ludovico  
Finds echo to that word?

KING. I cannot think  
Thou hast repaid me with ingratitude.

LUD. I do not love to make a boisterous boast  
Of my past services, and marshal forth  
In glittering array the benefit  
That I have done my sovereign—what I did  
Was but my duty.—Yet would I inquire  
If he who has fought your battles, and hath made  
A very thrall of victory—who oft  
Has back to Naples from the field of fight,  
Led your triumphant armies, “while the breeze  
“Spread out the royal banner, with its fold  
“Of floating glory, and yourself exclaimed  
“ ‘Twas unprofaned by one small drop of blood,—  
“ If he who from your shoulders has ta’en off  
“ The heavy mass of empire to relieve  
“ His sovereign from the ponderous load of rule,  
“ And leave you but its pleasures”—He whose hand  
Hath lined the oppressive diadem with down,  
And ta’en its pressure from the golden round—  
If he whose cheek hath at the midnight lamp  
Grown pale with study of his prince’s weal  
Is like to be a traitor—who, my liege,  
Hath often like the day-light’s god transpierced  
The hydra-headed monster of rebellion,  
And stretched it bleeding at your feet? who oft  
Hath from the infuriate people exorcised  
The talking dæmon, “liberty,” and choaked

The voice of clamorous demagogues ?—I dare  
To tell you 'twas Ludovico!

KING. It was.

LUD. Who calls me traitor ? He whose breath doth taint  
Whatever it blows upon—he “ who doth mock  
“ The antique severity, and only wants  
“ A toga to be a republican  
“ Of the old Roman fashion,—He who talks  
“ Abroad against your vices, (for he deems  
“ All blameless pleasure such,) and oftentimes  
“ Heaves a long sigh for those illustrious days  
“ When commonwealths made men.

“ KING. What ! dares he do so ?”

LUD. But, ask yourself, my lord, if I be mad ?  
For were I that, that he would make Ludovico,  
The cells of frenzy, not the scaffold’s plank,  
Would best beseem my treason.—In your love  
My fortunes grow and flourish unto heaven ;  
And I should win by treason but the load  
Of the world’s execration, while the fierce  
And ravenous vulture of remorse would tear  
The vitals of my soul, and make my heart  
Its black immortal banquet ! I a traitor !  
At first, I only meant to scorn.—But now,  
The bursting passion hath o’ermastered me,  
And my voice choaks in anguish ! Oh, my liege,  
Your giving audience to this rancorous man,  
Who envies me the greatness of your smile,  
Hath done me wrong, and stabs me thro’ and thro’.  
A traitor !—your Ludovico !

KING. My lord.

LUD. Here is my heart ! If you have any mercy,

Strike thro' that heart, and as the blood flows forth,  
Drown your suspicions in the purple stream.

KING. Arise, Ludovico, and do not think  
I have harboured in my breast a single thought  
That could dishonour thee.

LUD. My royal Master!  
The power of gratitude mounts from my heart,  
And rushes to mine eyes, that are too apt  
To play the woman with me. See, they are falling—  
Oh! let them not profane your sacred cheek,  
But bathe my prince's feet.

KING. Ludovico,  
We have wrong'd thee, not by doubt,  
But by our sufferance of Colonna's daring—  
Whom from my sight into the dungeon's depth  
I had flung, but that I hope—Let us apart—

[He draws Ludovico aside.

But that I hope, Ludovico, that yet  
I may possess me of his sister's charms.

LUD. There you have struck upon the inmost spring  
Of all Colonna's hate; for in obedience  
To your high will, I humbly made myself  
Your pleasure's minister, and to her ear  
I bore your proffered love, which he discovering  
Hath tried to root me from my Prince's heart—

KING. Where thou shalt ever flourish! But, Ludovico,  
But thou hast told her! Is there hope, my friend?

LUD. She shall be yours—nay, more—and well you know  
That you may trust your servant—not alone  
Colonna's lovely sister shall be yours;  
But, mark my speech, Colonna's self shall draw  
The chaste white curtains from her virgin-bed,  
And lead you to her arms!

KING. What! her fierce brother  
Yield his consent?

LUD. Inquire not how, my liege,  
I would accomplish this--trust to my pledge—  
This very night.

KING. To-night! Am I so near  
To heaven, Ludovico?

LUD. You are, my liege.  
To-night upon the breast of paradise  
You shall most soundly sleep.

[Aside.]

KING. My faithful friend!  
And dost thou say, Colonna will himself—?

LUD. Colonna's self shall bear her to your arms,  
And bid her on to dalliance.

KING. Oh, my friend,  
Thou art the truest servant that ere yet  
Tended his Sovereign's wish: but dost not fear,  
Her purposed marriage with Vicentio  
May make some obstacle?

LUD. I have recalled him  
From Florence, whither as ambassador,  
In honourable exile, he was sent.

KING. Recalled him? 'Twas to interrupt his love  
That he was sent.

LUD. My projects need his coming.  
“ 'Tis not in vain that he returns, my liege,”  
For I intend to make Vicentio  
An instrument to crown you with her charms!

KING. How shall I bless thee, my Ludovico?  
Is she not made of beauty? Dost thou think  
'Tis strange I pine for her—but why inquire  
Of thee, who once wert kindled by her charms.

LUD. My liege!

[A little disturbed.]

KING. She did prefer Vicentio.

LUD. She shall prefer you to Vicentio.

KING. My dear Ludovico, within my soul  
More closely will I wear thee!—is’t to-night?  
To-night, Ludovico!

LUD. Wish that the sun  
Would throw himself down the rich steeps of heaven,  
And night come gliding from the darkening east  
For, in her pall shall love with a golden torch,  
Just lighted in Cythera, sweetly tread,  
And laughing guide the pleasures as he trips.

KING. Tell her we’ll shower all honour on her head.—  
And here, Ludovico, to testify  
That we have given ourselves, bear to her heart  
This image of her King!

LUD. I am in all your servant.

KING. My Ludovico,  
We never can reward thee! Come, my friends,  
Let’s to some fresh-imagined sport, and wile  
The languid hours in some device of joy,  
To help along the lazy flight of time,  
And quicken him with pleasure.—My Ludovico!  
Remember!

[Exit King and part of the Courtiers,  
Spalatro, and four other Conspirators remain behind with  
Ludovico.

LUD. He is gone—at last he is gone,  
And my unloosened spirit dares again  
To heave within my bosom!—Oh Colonna.  
With an usurious vengeance I’ll repay thee,  
And cure the talking devil in thy tongue!—  
To Spalatro.] Give me thy hand, and let thy pulse again  
Beat with a temperate and healthful motion

Of full security.—We are safe, my friends,  
And in the genius of Ludovico,  
An enterprise shall triumph.

**SPAL.** We began to tremble when you entered—but full  
soon

With admiration we beheld you tread  
Secure the steeps of ruin, and preserve us.

**LUD.** That damn'd Colonna!—by the glorious star  
Of my nativity, I do not burn  
For empire, with a more infuriate thirst,  
Than for revenge!

**SPAL.** My poniard's at your service.

**1st CONS.** And mine!

**2d CONS.** And mine!

**LUD.** Not for the world, my friends!  
I'll turn my vengeance to utility,  
And must economize my hate—Whom think you  
Have I marked out assassin of the King?

**SPAL.** Piero, perchance—he strikes the poniard deep.

**LUD.** A better hand at it.

**SPAL.** Bartolo, then—

He pushes the stiletto to the heart.

**LUD.** No!

**SPAL.** Then yourself will undertake the deed.

**LUD.** That were against all wisdom—No, my friends,  
Colonna—

**SPAL.** What Colonna?—he that now  
Accused you here?

**LUD.** Colonna!—

**SPAL.** 'Tis impossible!—  
From his great father he inherited  
A sort of passion in his loyalty:  
In him it mounts to folly.

LUD. Yet, Spalatro,  
I'll make a murderer of him—know you not  
He has a sister?—

SPAL. Yes, the fair Evadne,  
You once did love yourself.

LUD. There thou hast touched me.  
And I am weak enough to love her yet,  
If that indeed be love that doth consume me;  
It is a sort of monster in my heart,  
Made up of horrid contrarieties!  
She scorns me for that smooth Vicentio—  
Not only does he thwart me in my love,  
But, well I know, his influence in the state  
Would, when the king is sent to Paradise,  
Be cast between me and the throne—he dies!—  
Colonna too shall perish, and the crown  
Shall with Evadne's love be mine.

*Enter Servant.*

How now?

SER. My lord, the lady Olivia  
Waits on your highness.

LUD. I desired her here,  
And straight I will attend her. [*Exit Servant.*  
With a straw

A town may be consum'd, and I employ  
This woman's passion for Vicentio,  
As I would use a poison'd pin, to kill.

SPAL. She long hath loved Vicentio.

LUD. He shall wed her—  
And from the hand of Hymen, Death shall snatch  
The nuptial torch, and use it for his own!

I haste me to her presence. [Takes out the King's picture.  
Come! fair bauble,

Thou now must be employ'd. (To Spal.) Dost thou not  
think,

Even in his image, that he bears the soft  
And wanton aspect with the which he bid me  
To cater for his villainous appetite—  
And with what luxury?—Evadne's charms!—  
Evadne that I love?—

SPAL. But, didst thou not  
Thyself evoke that passion in his breast?

LUD. I did, 'tis true—but for mine own success,  
I hate him!—Wouldst thou deem that he would dare  
To choose me for his minister of sin,  
And bid me gain her for his luxury?  
There is the very face with which he first  
Pour'd his unholy wishes in mine ear—  
Ha! dost thou smile upon me?—I will turn  
Those glittering eyes, where love doth now inhabit,  
To two dark hollow palaces, for Death  
To keep his mouldering state in, “and upon  
“ Those lips, where wanton smiles are softly curl'd,  
“ I'll twine a wreath of rich and clustering worms,  
“ To feast upon their moist, and rosy pouting!”—  
He dares to hope that I will make myself  
The wretched officer of his desires,  
And smooth the bed for his lascivious pleasures—  
But I full soon will teach his royalty,  
The beds I make are lasting ones, and lie  
In the dark chambers of eternity!

[Exeunt.

## A C T II.

## SCENE I.

*A Room in the Palace.*

*Enter OLIVIA and LUDOVICO.*

LUD. **D**ISPOSE of it as I instructed you ;

[*Giving her the King's Picture.*

You know that I have pledged myself to make

Vicentio yours.—To-day yourself have given

The means to turn that promise into deed.

You are among the noblest of my kin,

And I would mate you with Vicentio,

To raise my proper fortunes.

OLIV. My own heart  
Tells me, 'tis a bad office I have ta'en ;  
But this unhappy passion drives me on,  
And makes my soul your thrall—Thus I have crept  
Obedient to your counsels, meanly crept  
Into Evadne's soft, and trusting heart,  
And coiled myself around her—Thus, my lord,  
Have I obtained the page of amorous sighs  
That you enjoined me to secure—I own

"Twas a false deed, but I am gone too far  
To seek retreat, and will obey you still.

LUD. And I will crown your passion with the flowers  
Of Hymen's yellow garland—Trust me, Olivia,  
That once dissevered from Evadne's love,  
He will soon be taught to prize your nobler frame,  
And more enkindled beauty—Well, 'tis known  
Ere he beheld the sorceress " who beguiled  
" His soul with meekly artificial smiles,"  
He deemed you fairest of created things,  
And would have proffered love, had not—

OLIV. I pray you,  
With gems of flattery do not disturb  
The fount of bitterness within my soul ;—  
For dropped tho' ne'er so nicely, they but stir  
The poisoned waters as they fall—I have said  
I will obey you.

LUD. With this innocent page  
Will I light up a fire within Vicentio,—  
But you must keep it flaming—I have ta'en  
Apt means to drive him into jealousy.  
By scattering rumours (which have reached his ear)  
Before he come to Naples—e'en in Florence  
Have I prepared his soft and yielding mind  
To take the seal that I would fix upon it.  
I do expect him with the fleeting hour,—  
For, to my presence he must come to bear  
His embassy's commission, and be sure  
He leaves me with a poison in his heart,  
Evadne's lips shall never suck away.

OLIV. Then will I hence, and if 'tis possible,  
Your bidding shall be done.—Vicentio !

*Enter VICENTIO.*

VIC. Hail to my lord!

LUD. Welcome, Vicentio!

I have not clasp'd your hand this many a day!

Welcome from Florence. In your absence, sir,  
Time seemed to have lost his feathers.

VIC. It was kind

To waste a thought upon me.—Fair Olivia,  
Florence hath dimmed mine eyes, or I must else  
Have seen a sun-beam sooner. Fair Olivia,  
How does your lovely friend?

OLIV. What friend, my lord?

VIC. I trust nought evil hath befallen Evadne,  
That you should feign to understand me not.  
How does my beautiful and plighted love?

OLIV. How does she, sir? I pray you, my good lord  
To ask such tender question of the king. [Exit.

VIC. What meant she by the king? (*aside.*)

LUD. You seem, Vicentio,  
O'ershadowed with reflection—should you  
Not have used some soft detaining phrase to one,  
Who should at least be pitied?

VIC. I came here  
To re-deliver to your hands, my lord,  
The high commission of mine embassy,  
That long delayed my marriage. You, I deem  
My creditor, in having used your sway  
In my recall to Naples.

LUD. In return for such small service, “in the which  
“ My zeal outstrips the tardy benefit,” I hope  
That you will not forget Ludovico,  
When in the troop of thronging worshippers,

At distance you behold his stooping plume  
Bend in humility.

VIC. What means my Lord?

LUD. Act not this ignorance—your glorious fortune  
Hath filled the common mouth—there's not a wight,  
Who ever tortured verse upon the rack  
Of his parturient brain, has not already  
Indited you in sonorous eulogy—  
The jesting villains mimic insolence  
(Who counterfeit the faces of the great,)  
Has set your image in the common mart  
Of pictured ridicule—Come, do not wear  
The look of studied wonderment—you know  
Howe'er I stand upon the highest place  
In the King's favour, that you will full soon  
Supplant the poor Ludovico, that cast  
Amid the rout and populace of the court  
Will live upon your smile.

VIC. I am no OEdipus.

LUD. You would have me speak in simpler phrase; Vi-  
centio,

You are to be the favorite of the King.

VIC. The favorite of the King!

LUD. Certes, Vicentio.

In our Italian courts, the generous husband  
Receives his monarch's recompensing smile,  
That with alchymic power, can turn the mass  
Of dull opprobrious shame, to one bright heap  
Of honour and emolument.—“ How oft  
“ The rich Pactolus of a prince's favour  
“ Flows from a filthy fountain!—Have you marked  
“ The fat luxuriance of the juicy plant  
“ That flourishes in churchyards?—’tis, my lord,

“ That rottenness manures. The vilest shame  
“ (Shame in the dull opinion of the world  
“ A wise man sets at nought,) begets more honours  
“ Than a whole life of service to the state,  
“ And veins made bloodless in a thousand battles.”  
I bid you joy, my lord—why, how is this?  
Do you not yet conceive me? Know you not  
You are to wed the mistress of the king?  
Colonna’s sister—aye, I have said it, sir,—  
Now, do you understand me?

VIC. Villain, thou liest!

LUD. What? are you not to marry her?

VIC. Thou liest;

Tho’ thou wert ten times what thou art already,  
Not all the laurels heaped upon thy head  
Should save thee from the lightnings of my wrath!

“ Vile, and infectious slave, thy calumny  
“ Is like a corpse’s reeking at the sun,  
“ And staining the white day!—Thou wretched worm,  
“ Who sheddest thy poison-slime upon the flower  
“ Of a pure woman’s honour, and where’er  
“ Thou crawllest, pollutest.”

LUD. If it was my will,  
The movement of my hand should beckon death  
To thy presumption. But I have proved too oft  
I bore a fearless heart, to think you dare  
To call me coward—and I am too wise  
To think I can revenge an injury  
By giving you my life. But I compassionate,  
Nay, I have learned to esteem thee for a wrath,  
That gives me proof thou dost not yield consent  
To infamy, that many a courtier here

Would think the plume of fortune. Fare thee well !  
Thy pulse is now too fevered for the cure  
I honestly intended—yet, before  
I part, here take this satisfying proof  
Of what a woman's made of.

[Gives him a letter.

VIC. It is her character !  
Hast thou shed phosphor on the innocent page,  
That it has turned to fire ?

LUD. Thou hast thy fate :  
“ But be not the vile worm to spin thyself  
“ The black and slimy thread whereof tis made.

VIC. 'Tis signed, “ Evadne.”  
LUD. Yes, it is—farewell !

VIC. For heaven's sake, hear me—Stay—Oh, pardon me  
For the rash utterance of a frantic man—  
Whence ? how ? where ? speak ? in mercy speak !

LUD. I will,  
In mercy speak, indeed—in mercy to  
That fervid generosity of heart  
That I behold within thee—“ and despite  
“ Of the high injury thou hast cast upon me.”

VIC. From whom is this ?  
LUD. From whom ? look there !

VIC. Evadne !  
LUD. 'Tis written to the king, and to my hand.  
For he is proud of it, as if it were  
A banner of high victory, he bore it,  
To evidence his valour—It is grown  
His cup-theme now, and your Evadne's name  
Is lisped with all the insolence on his tongue  
Of satiated triumph—he exclaims—  
The poor Vicentio !

VIC. The poor Vicentio !

LUD. What ! shall he murder him ? (*aside*) no, no,—  
Colonna !

The poor Vicentio ! and he oftentimes  
Cries, that he pities you !

VIC. He pities me !

LUD. I own that some time I was infidel  
To all the bombast vaunting of the king,  
But—

VIC. 'Tis Evadne !—I have gazed upon it,  
In hope that with the glaring of mine eyes  
I might burn out the false and treacherous word—  
But, still 'tis there—no more—else will it turn  
My brain to a red furnace.—Look you, my lord—  
Thus as I rend the cursed evidence  
Of that vile woman's falsehood—thus I cast  
My love into the winds, and as I tread  
Upon the poisoned fragments of the snake  
That stings me into madness, thus, Ludovico,  
Thus do I trample on her !

LUD. Have you ne'er heard,  
For 'twas so widely scattered in the voice  
Of common rumour, that the very wind,  
If it blew fair for Florence —

VIC. I have heard  
Some whispers, which I long had flung away  
With an incredulous hatred from my heart—  
But now, this testimony has conjured  
All other circumstances in one vast heap  
Of damned certainty !—Farewell, my lord—  
I 'll seek that false one out, and to her face  
Upbraid her with her perjured perfidies—  
That is the only vengeance left me still,

And I would take it.—

LUD. I know, Vicentio,  
 Vengeance is left you still—the deadliest too  
 That a false woman can be made to feel :  
 Take her example—be not satisfied  
 With casting her for ever from your heart,  
 But to the place that she has forfeited,  
 Exalt a lovelier than—but I perceive  
 You are not in a mood to hear me now—  
 Some other time, Vicentio—and, meanwhile,  
 Despite your first tempestuous suddenness,  
 You will think that I but meant your honour well  
 In this proceeding.

VIC. I believe I owe you  
 That sort of desperate gratitude, my lord,  
 The dying patient owes the barbarous knife,  
 That delvés in throes of mortal agony,  
 And tears the rooted cancer from his heart !

[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II.

*A Room in Colonna's Palace.*

EVADNE discovered looking at a picture.

EVAD. 'Tis strange he comes not! thro' the city's gates  
 His panting courser passed, before the sun  
 Had climbed to his meridian, yet he comes not!—  
 Methinks the very throbings of my heart,

With slow distinctness mete the hours away  
As heavily, as to a sick man's ear  
Time's monitor beneath his pillow strikes  
Before the dawn of day-light.—Ah! Vicentio,  
To know thee near me, yet behold thee not,  
Is sadder than to think thee far away ;  
For I had rather that a thousand leagues  
Of mountain ocean should dissever us,  
Than thine own heart, Vicentio.—Sure, Vicentio,  
If thou didst know with what a pining gaze  
I feed mine eyes upon thine image here,  
Thou wouldest not now leave thine Evadne's love  
To this same cold idolatry.

OLIVIA enters unperceived.

I will swear

That smile's a false one, for it sweetly tells  
No tarrying indifference—Olivia!

OLIV. I have stolen unperceived upon your hours  
Of lonely meditation, and surprised  
Your soft soliloquies to that fair face.—  
Nay, do not blush—reserve that rosy dawn  
For the soft pressure of Vicentio's lips.

EVAD. You mock me, fair Olivia,—I confess  
That musing on my cold Vicentio's absence,  
I quarrelled with the blameless ivory.

OLIV. He was compelled as soon as he arrived,  
To wait upon the great Ludovico ;  
Meanwhile your soft, expecting moments flow  
In tender meditation on the face,  
You dare to gaze upon in ivory  
With fonder aspect, than when you behold  
Its bright original ; for then 'tis meet  
Your pensive brows be bent upon the ground,

And sighs as soft as zephyrs on the wave  
 Should gently heave your heart.—Is it not so?  
 Nay, do not now rehearse your part, I pray  
 Reserve those downcast lookings for Vicentio,  
 That's a fair picture—let me, if you dare  
 Entrust the treasure to another's hand,  
 Let me look on it. (*Takes VICENTIO's picture.*)  
 What a sweetness plays  
 On those half-opened lips!—He gazed on you  
 When those bright eyes were painted.

EVAD. You have got  
 A heart so free of care, that you can mock  
 Your pensive friend with such light merriment.  
 But hark! I hear a step.

OLIV. (*Aside.*) Now fortune aid me  
 In her precipitation.

EVAD. It is himself!—  
 Olivia, he is coming—Well I know  
 My Lord Vicentio hastens to mine eyes!  
 The picture—prithee give it back to me—  
 I must constrain you to it.

OLIV. (*Who has substituted the picture of the King.*)  
 It is in vain  
 To struggle with you then—with what a grasp  
 You rend it from my hand, as if it were  
 Vicentio that I had stolen away.

(*Gives her the King's picture, which EVADNE places  
 in her bosom.*)

I triumph!—(*Aside.*)—He is coming—I must leave you,  
 Nor interrupt the meeting of your hearts  
 By my officious presence.

[*Exit.*

EVAD. It is himself!  
 Swiftly he passes thro' the colonnade,

And flies into mine arms.—Vicentio,  
Thy coming bears me joy as bright as e'er  
Beat thro' the heart of woman, that was made  
For suffering, and for transport!—Oh, Vicentio!

*Enter VICENTIO.*

Are you then come at last?—do I once more  
Behold my bosom's lord, whose tender sight  
Is necessary for my happiness  
As light for heaven!—My lord!—Vicentio!—  
I blush to speak the transport in my heart,  
But I am rapt to see you.

VIC. And, Evadne,  
I am all joy. (*aside.*) I 'll hide the serpent here,  
And use her for awhile, with the same arts  
She plays upon myself.—I am rejoiced—

EVAD. And I!—if every bosom were so glad  
As mine for your return, which I have prayed  
In nightly orisons, the bells of Naples  
Would from their steeples peal their chimes of joy;  
Flowers should be strewed before your passing steps,  
The very dust made of the leaves of roses!—  
I am in sooth so joyous at your sight,  
That I forget to chide you—how is this?

VIC. Dissembling woman! (*aside.*)

EVAD. How is this, my lord?

Methinks you look most sadly, or what 's worse,  
Most coldly on Evadne—'tis perchance,  
The fault of mine expecting eyes, that seek  
The warm reflection of their joyfulness.  
Why, once, if you were absent but a day,  
At our next meeting you were bright as morn

In the sweet May; but now, you are grown as cold  
As winter's chilly day-break—you look altered.

VIC. But you do not look altered—would you did!  
Let me peruse the face where loveliness  
Stays, like the light after the sun is set.  
Sphered in the stillness of those heaven-blue eyes,  
The soul sits beautiful; the high white front,  
Smooth as the brow of Pallas, seems a temple  
Sacred to holy thinking! and those lips  
Wear the small smile of sleeping infancy,  
They are so innocent.—Ah! thou art still  
The same soft creature, in whose lovely form  
Virtue and beauty seemed as if they tried  
Which should exceed the other.—Thou hast got  
That brightness all around thee that appeared  
An emanation of the soul that loved  
To adorn its habitation with itself,  
And in thy body was like light that looks  
More beautiful in the reflecting cloud  
It lives in, in the evening. Oh! Evadne,  
Thou art not altered—would thou wert!

EVA. Vicentio,  
This strangeness I scarce hoped for.—Say, Vicentio,  
Has any ill befallen you?—I perceive  
That its warm bloom hath parted from your cheek,  
And there's a parched dryness in your hand,  
That shows the torrid fever of the blood—  
Ah me! you are not well, Vicentio.

VIC. In sooth, I am not.—There is in my breast  
A wound that mocks all cure—no salve, nor anodyne,  
Nor medical herb, nor minist'ring  
Of anxious care from hands as delicate  
As e'er affection tutored in the arts

Of kindly restoration, can allay  
The festering of that agonizing wound  
You have driven into my heart!

EVAD. I?

VIC. You, Evadne!

Evadne, you—you have stabbed me to the soul,  
Turned the Elysium prospects in the vale  
Of my young life, as ruined church-yards bleak,  
And of my springing joys, and blossoming hopes,  
Made all a desolation. Why, Evadne,  
Why did you ever tell me that you loved me?  
Why was I not in mercy spurned away,  
Scorned, like Ludovico? for unto him  
You dealt in honour, and despised his love:  
But me you soothed and flattered—sighed and blushed—  
And smiled and wept, for you can weep; (even now  
Your tears flow by volition, and your eyes  
Convenient fountains have begun to gush,)  
To stab me with a falsehood yet unknown  
In falsest woman's perfidy?

EVAD. Vicentio,

Why am I thus accused? What have I done?

VIC. What!—are you grown already an adept  
In cold dissimulation? Have you stopped  
All access from your heart into your face?  
Do you not blush?

EVAD. I do, indeed, for you!

VIC. The King?

EVAD. The King?

VIC. Come, come, confess at once, and wear it high  
Upon your towering forehead—swell your port—  
Away with this unseemly bashfulness,  
That will be deemed a savageness at court—

Confront the talking of the busy world—  
Tell them you are the mistress of the King,  
Tell them you are Colonna's sister too ;  
But, hark you, Madam—prithee do not say  
You are Vicentio's wife !

EVAD. Injurious man !

VIC. The very winds from the four parts of heaven  
Blew it throughout the city—

EVAD. And if angels

Cried, trumpet-tongued, that I was false to you,  
You should not have believed it.—You forget  
Who dares to stain a woman's honesty,  
Does her a wrong, as deadly as the brand  
He fears upon himself.—Go, go, Vicentio—  
You are not what I deemed you !—Mistress ? fie !  
Go, go, Vicentio ! let me not behold  
The man who has reviled me with a thought  
Dishonouring as that one !—Oh ! Vicentio,  
Do I deserve this of you ?

VIC. Are these tears

The counterfeits of grief ? that sob appeared  
The breaking of the heart from which it came.  
If I had wronged her—but that cursed scroll—

EVAD. It is much better we should meet no more—  
Leave me, my lord !—Mistress !—

VIC. If I had wronged her !—

Were it possible, Ludovico,  
Who, well I know, doth at his heart abhor me,  
Had framed a counterfeit ?

EVAD. I will not descend  
To vindicate myself—dare to suspect me—  
My lord, I am to guess that you came here,  
To speak your soul's revolt, and to demand

Your plighted vows again—If for this  
You tarry here, I freely give you back  
Your late repented faith—Farewell for ever!

[*As she is going out.*

VIC. Evadne !

EVAD. Well, my lord ?—

VIC. Evadne, stay !—

EVAD. Vicentio !

[*With a look of reproaching remonstrance.*

VIC. Let me look in thy face—

Sure if a fiend did with a look like thine  
Appear before the golden gates of heaven,  
The guarding-angel there would think it was  
A sister-spirit of the blessed, and bid  
The harmonious hinges turn to let thee in.  
Oh ! 'tis impossible !—I was bemocked,  
And cheated by that villain !—nothing false  
Sure ever looked like thee, and if thou wilt  
But swear—

EVAD. What should I swear ?—

VIC. That you did not  
Betray me to the King.

EVAD. Never !—

VIC. Nor e'er  
Didst write in love to him ?

EVAD. Oh ! never, never !—I perceive, Vicentio,  
Some villain hath abused thy credulous ear—  
But no !—I will not now inquire it of thee—  
When I am calmer—I must hence betimes,  
To chase these blots of sorrow from my face,—  
For if Colonna should behold me weep,  
So tenderly he loves me, that I fear,

His hot, tempestuous nature—Why, Vicentio,  
 Do you still wrong me with a wildered eye  
 That sheds suspicion?—Why, Vicentio,  
 Do you peruse me thus?

VIC. I now remember  
 Another circumstance, Ludovico  
 Did tell me as I came—I do not see  
 My picture on her bosom.

EVAD. Well, Vicentio,  
 Hath jealousy's wild flow returned again?  
 Does the tide rise beneath the ruling moon?

VIC. When I departed hence, about your neck  
 I hung my pictured likeness, which mine eyes,  
 Made keen by jealous vigilance, perchance  
 Desire upon your breast.

EVAD. And, is that all?  
 And in such fond and petty circumstance  
 Seek you suspicion's nourishment?—Vicentio,  
 I must disclose my weakness—here, Vicentio,  
 I have pillow'd your dear image on a heart  
 You should not have distrusted.

[*She draws the King's Picture from her Bosom.*  
 Here it is—

And now, my lord, suspect me if you can.

VIC. (*starting.*) A horrid phantom, more accursed than e'er  
 Yet crossed the sleep of frenzy, stares upon me—  
 Speak—speak at once—nay, do not seem of stone—  
 I'll turn thee back to horrid life again,  
 And if it be the villain that has wronged me,  
 Here—let it blast thee too.

EVAD. Sure, some dark spell,  
 Some fearful witchery; I am struck to ashes,—

Amazement, like the lightning—give it me,  
And I will fix it in my very eyes,  
Clasp it against my sight—'Tis not Vicentio!—

VIC. It is the King!—

EVAD. Oh! do not yield it faith,—  
Give not thy senses credence! Oh, Vicentio,  
I am confounded, maddened, lost, Vicentio!  
Some daemon paints it on the coloured air—  
'Tis not reality that stares upon me!—  
Oh! hide it from my sight!

VIC. Chance has betrayed thee,  
And saves my periled honour—Here, thou all fraud,  
Thou mass of painted perjury,—thou woman!—  
And now I have done with thee, and pray to heaven  
I ne'er may see thee more—But, hold!—I must  
Recall that wish again—The time will come  
When I would look on thee—a little while  
Thou wilt roll in gilded infamy along,  
With all the pomp that tends the courtly sin  
Done in a prince's arms—Thou wilt appear  
High in thy regal state, as in the car  
Of swan-drawn Venus!—But, be sure at last  
Thy turn will come, for Love has got his wheel  
As well as Fortune—then, Evadne, then,  
When the world's scorn is on thee, let me see  
Thee, old in youth, and bending 'neath the load  
Of sorrow, not of time—then let me see thee,  
And mayest thou, as I pass, lift up thy head  
But once from the sad earth, and then, Evadne,  
Look down again for ever?

[Exit.

(EVADNE at first not perceiving that he is gone, and  
recovering from her stupefaction.

EVAD. I will swear—  
Give it back to me—Oh! I am innocent!

*Enter COLONNA—she rushes up to him, mistaking  
him for a moment for VICENTIO.*

By heaven, I am innocent!

COL. Who dares to doubt it?

Who knows thee of that noble family  
That cowardice in man, or wantonness  
In woman never tarnished?—

EVAD. He is gone! (*aside.*)

COL. But, how is this, Evadne? In your face  
I read a wildered air has ta'en the place  
Of that placidity that used to shine  
For ever on thy holy countenance.

EVAD. Now, as I value my Vicentio's life—

COL. One of love's summer clouds, I doubt me, sister,  
Hath floated o'er you, tho' 'twere better far  
That it had left no rain-drops.—What has happened?

EVAD. There's nothing has befallen, only—

COL. What, only?

EVAD. I pray you pardon me—I must begone!

COL. Evadne, stay! let me behold you well—  
Why do you stand at distance? nearer still,  
Evadne!—

EVAD. Well?—

COL. Vicentio—

EVAD. (*assuming an affected lightness of manner*)  
Why, Colonna—

Think you that I'm without my sex's arts,  
And did not practise all the torturings  
That make a woman's triumph?

COL. 'Twas not well.

I hoped thee raised above all artifice  
That makes thy sex but infancy matured.  
I was at first inclined to follow him,  
And ask what this might mean?

EVAD. Then he had told  
That I had played the tyrant.—Had you seen  
How like my peevish lap-dog he appeared  
Just beaten with a fan—Ha! ha! Colonna,  
You will find us all alike—Ha! ha! my heart  
Will break if I stay longer—pardon me,  
Colonna, I must leave you—Oh! Vicentio!

(*Bursts into tears.*)

COL. Farewell!

EVAD. What would you do?

COL. Let all the world  
Hold me a slave, and hoard upon my head  
Its gathered infamy—be all who bear  
Colonna's name scorn-blighted—may disgrace  
Gnaw off all honour from my family,  
If I permit an injury to thee  
To 'scape Colonna's vengeance!—

EVAD. Hold, my brother!  
I will not leave thy sight!

COL. Then follow me,  
And if thou art abandoned, after all  
Vicentio's plighted faith, thou shalt behold—  
By heavens, an emperor should not do thee wrong,  
Or if he did, tho' I had a thousand lives,  
I had given them all to avenge thee.—I'll inquire  
Into this business; and if I find  
Thou hast lost a lover, I will give him proof,  
I've my right arm, and thou thy brother still!

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

## ACT III.

## SCENE I.

*A Street in Naples—the front of Olivia's House.*

*Enter LUDOVICO and VICENTIO.*

LUD. THERE is Olivia's house !

VIC. Thou hast resolved me.

I thank thee for thy counsel, and at once

Speed to its dread performance. [He raps at the door.

*Enter Servant.*

'Bides the lady Olivia in her home ?

SERV. She does, my lord.

[Exit.

VIC. Farewell, Ludovico ! thou seest, my friend,  
For such I ever hold thee, that I pass  
The stream of destiny. Thou sayest, Ludovico,  
'Tis necessary for my fame.

LUD. No less.—

By marrying Olivia you disperse  
The noises that abroad did sully you,  
Of having given consent to play the cloak  
To the king's dalliance.

VIC. Oh, speak of it  
No more, Ludovico—farewell, my friend,  
I will obey your counsels.— [Exit into Olivia's house.

LUD. Fare you well,  
My passionate, obsequious instrument,  
Whom now I scorn so much, I scarcely let thee  
Reach to the dignity of being hated.

*Enter the KING, disguised.*

KING. My faithful servant, my Ludovico !  
LUD. My prince ! I did not hope to meet you here !—  
What, in this masqued attire, has made you veil  
The dazzling brightness of your royalty,  
And led you from your palace ?

KING. I have ta'en  
Concealment's wonted habit, to escape  
The hundred eyes of curiosity,  
And, wearied with rotatory course  
Of dull unchanging pleasure, sought for thee.  
Shall she be mine, Ludovico ?

LUD. My liege,  
I marvel not at the impatient throb  
Of restless expectation in your heart,  
“ For she is fairer than the ideal forms  
“ Of purest beauty in the raptured soul  
“ Of him who sang Orlando's frenzied love,  
“ Or the soft tale of Sion's liberty.”—  
And know, my liege, that not in vain I toil,  
To waft you to her bosom, for Vicentio  
Renounces her for ever !

KING. Dost thou say  
Vicentio hath renounced her ?

LUD. Yes my liege,  
Not only has abandoned her, but moved  
By my wise counsels, hath already prayed  
The fair Olivia's hand.

KING. How, my Ludovico,  
Didst thou accomplish it?

LUD. I turned to use  
The passion of Olivia ; " round the soul  
" Of your Evadne did she wind herself ;  
" That she might win some evidence at last  
" To shed into Vicentio's credulous ear  
" The maddening pestilence of jealousy.  
" And soon 'twas gained ; for " while Evadne traced  
A letter to Vicentio, suddenly  
The news of his expected coming reached  
Her panting breast, and in the rush of joy,  
Unfinished on her table did she leave  
The page of amorous wishes, which the care  
Of unperceived Olivia, haply seized,  
And bore unto my hand—Vicentio's name  
Was drowned in hurried vocatives of love,  
As thus—" My lord—my life—my soul"—the which  
I made advantage of, and did persuade him  
'Twas written to your highness,—and with lights  
Caught from the very torch of truest love,  
I fired the furies' brands——

KING. My faithful friend !

LUD. Then with your picture did Olivia work  
Suspicion into frenzy—when he came  
From your Evadne's house, I threw myself,  
As if by fortune, in his path—I urged  
His heated passions to my purposes,  
And bade him ask Olivia's hand, to prove

How much he scorned her falsehood.—Even now  
He makes his suit, for there Olivia dwells,  
And as you came, he entered.

KING. But wherein  
Will this promote the crowning of my love ?  
LUD. I said Colonna's self should be the first  
To lead you to her arms—

KING. Thou didst, Ludovico,  
The which perform'd, I 'll give thee half my realm.

LUD. (*aside.*) You shall give all !  
KING. Accomplish this, my friend,  
Thou art my great Apollo !

LUD. No, my liege,  
You shall be Jove, and in her arms to-night,  
Will taste more joys than the Olympian did  
In golden showers in Danaë's yielding heart—  
“ Or when he shut out Phœbus from the heavens,  
“ And for a triple night he mock'd the form  
“ Of sweet Alcmena's husband—while my liege,  
“ I play the winged messenger of love.”

KING. Ludovico, thou art as dear to me  
As the rich circle of my royalty.  
Farewell, Ludovico, I shall expect  
Some speedy tidings from thee—fare thee well !  
To-night, Ludovico.

[*Exit.*

LUD. To-night, you perish !  
Colonna's dagger shall let out your blood,  
And lance your wanton, and high-swelling veins.—  
That I should stoop to such an infamy !  
“ Thy gore shall be my robe of royalty—  
“ I 'll dress myself in purple with thy blood,  
“ And underneath none will discern the stain  
“ That now besmears my fame.”—Evadne here !

*Enter EVADNE.*

Not for the king, but for myself I mean,  
A feast fit for the gods!

EVAD. (*with some agitation.*) My lord Ludovico—

LUD. The beautiful Evadne! do you deign  
To breathe a name that is not often wont  
Thus to be wrapped in fragrance? Lovely woman!—  
What would the brightest maid of Italy  
Of her poor servant?

EVAD. Sir, may I entreat  
Your knowledge where the Count Vicentio  
Bides at this present instant? I have been informed  
He companied you here.

LUD. It grieves me sore  
He hath done you so much wrong.

EVAD. What may you mean?

LUD. 'Tis talked of in the whispering gallery,  
Where Envy holds her court: “ with brighter eyes,  
“ Each rival beauty beams; and rosier flushes,  
“ Poured by malevolence into the cheek  
“ Of tittering loveliness, proclaim how glad  
“ Is every woman of a woman’s woe.”  
Who would have thought Vicentio’s heart was like  
A play-thing stuck with Cupid’s lightest plumes  
Thus to be tossed from one heart to another?  
Or rather, who had thought that you were made  
For such abandonment?

EVAD. I scarce can guess—

LUD. I did not mean to touch so nice a wound.  
If you desire to learn where now he bides,  
I can inform you.

EVAD. Where, Ludovico?

LUD. Yonder, Evadne, in Olivia's house.

EVAD. Olivia's house? what would he there?

LUD. You know

Vicentio and Olivia are to-day—

EVAD. My lord?

LUD. Are to be married—

EVAD. Married, my lord?

Vicentio and Olivia to be married?—

LUD. I am sorry that it moves you thus—Evadne;  
Had I been used as that ingrate, be sure  
I ne'er had proved like him—I would not thus  
Have flung thee like a poppy from my heart,  
A drowsy sleep-provoking flower—Evadne,  
I had not thus deserted you!

[Exit.

EVAD. Vicentio,  
Olivia and Vicentio to be married?  
I heard it—yes—I am sure I did—Vicentio!  
Olivia to be married!—and Evadne,  
Whose heart was made of adoration—  
Vicentio in her house? there—underneath  
That woman's roof—behind the door that looks  
To shut me out from hope—I will myself—

[Advancing, then checking herself.

I do not dare to do it—but he could not—  
He could not use me thus—he could not—Ha!

[VICENTIO enters from OLIVIA's House.

VIC. Evadne here?

EVAD. Would I had been born blind,  
Not to behold the fatal evidence  
Of my abandonment!—Am I condemned  
Even by the ocular proof, to be made sure  
That I'm a wretch for ever!—

VIC. Does she come

After the fashion of all womankind.  
 To bate me with reproaches? or does she dare  
 To think that she can angle me again  
 To the vile pool wherein she meant to catch me?  
 I'll pass her with the bitterness of scorn,  
 Her falsehood has extorted from my heart,  
 Nor seem to know her present to my sight.

[*He passes EVADNE.*

She looks upon me with a speechless gaze  
 That seems half sorrow, half astonishment,  
 Now I am at least revenged. [Going.]

EVAD. My lord, I pray you—  
 My lord, I dare entreat—Vicentio—

VIC. Who calls upon Vicentio? Was it you?  
 What would you with him, for I bear the name.

EVAD. Sir, I—

VIC. Go on—I'll taunt her to the quick—  
 Ludovico, I thank thee for thy lore;  
 In the deep science of a woman's heart.—

EVAD. My lord, I—

VIC. Pray you speak—I cannot guess  
 By such wild broken phrase what you would have  
 Of one who knows you not.

EVAD. Not know me?

VIC. No—

Let me look in your face—there is indeed  
 Some faint resemblance to a countenance  
 Once much familiar to Vicentio's eyes,  
 But 'tis a shadowy one—she that I speak of  
 Was full of virtues as the milky way  
 Upon a frozen night is thick with stars.  
 She was as pure as an untasted fountain,  
 Fresh as an April blossom, kind as love,  
 As meek as patience, as religion holy,

And good as infants giving charity!—  
Such was Evadne—fare you well!

EVAD. My lord,  
Is 't true what I've heard?—

VIC. What have you heard?  
EVAD. Speak—are you to be married—let me hear it—  
Thank God I've strength to hear it.

VIC. I scarce guess  
What interest you find in one that deems  
Himself a stranger to you.

EVAD. Sir—

VIC. But if  
You are indeed solicitous to learn  
Aught that imports me, learn that I to-day  
Have asked the fair Olivia's hand, in place of one—

EVAD. You have bedewed with tears, and that henceforth  
Will feel no lack of tears, though they may fall  
From other eyes than yours.—So then, Vicentio,  
Fame did not wrong you—You are to be married?—

VIC. To one within whose heart as pure a fire  
As in the shrine of Vesta long has burned.  
Not the coarse flame of a corrupted heart,  
To every worship dedicate alike,  
A false perfidious seeming.—

EVAD. I implore you  
To spare your accusations.—I am come—

VIC. Doubtless, to vindicate yourself.—  
EVAD. Oh, no!—

An angel now would vainly plead my cause  
Within Vicentio's heart—therefore, my lord,  
I have no intent to interrupt the rite  
That makes that lady yours; but I am come  
Thus breathless as you see me—would to God

I could be tearless too!—you will think, perhaps,  
That 'gainst the trembling fearfulness I sin,  
That best becomes a woman, and that most  
Becomes a sad abandoned one.—

VIC. Evadne—

Evadne, you deceive yourself.

EVAD. I knew

I should encounter this—Vicentio,  
False as you are.—

VIC. Perfidious—pardon me,  
I have not e'en the right to upbraid you now—  
We are henceforth as strange as tho' our eyes  
Had never yet encountered.

EVAD. Oh, Vicentio,  
I will endure all this—nay, more, my lord,  
Hear all the vengeance I intend.—

VIC. Go on.—

EVAD. May you be happy with that happier maid  
That never could have loved you more than I do,  
But may deserve you better.—May your days,  
Like a long stormless summer, glide away,  
And peace and trust be with you.—May you be  
The after-patterns of felicity,  
That lovers, when they wed, may only wish  
To be as blest as you were—loveliness  
Dwell round about you like an atmosphere  
Of our soft southern air, where every flower  
In Hymen's yellow wreath may bloom and blow.  
Let nature with the strong domestic bond  
Of parent tenderness unite your hearts  
In holier harmony; and when you see  
What you both love, more ardently adore!  
And when at last you close your gentle lives,

Blameless as they were blessed, may you fall  
Into the grave as softly, as the leaves  
Of two sweet roses on an autumn eve,  
Beneath the small sighs of the western wind,  
Drop to the earth together!—for myself—  
I will but pray—(*sobbing.*) I will but pray, my lord.

VIC. I must begone, else she may soon regain  
A mastery o'er my nature.

EVAD. Oh, Vicentio,  
I see that I am doomed a trouble to you.  
I shall not long be so. I soon shall cease  
To be of care to you, or to myself,  
Or to aught else in this gay glittering world—  
There's but one trouble I shall ever give  
To any one again. I will but pray  
The Maker of the lonely beds of peace  
To open one of his deep hollow ones,  
Where misery goes to sleep, and let me in;—  
If ever you chance to pass beside my grave,  
I am sure you'll not refuse a little sigh,  
And if my friend, (I still will call her so)  
My friend, Olivia, chide you, prithee tell her  
Not to be jealous of me in my grave.

VIC. The picture? in your bosom near your heart—  
There on the very swellings of your breast,  
The very shrine of chastity, you raised  
A foul and cursed idol!—Speak, Evadne,  
I'll try to lend thee faith—nay, I am willing—

EVAD. You did not give me time—no—not a moment  
To think what villany was wrought, to make me  
So hateful to your eyes—It is too late,  
You are Olivia's, I have no claim to you—  
You have renounced me—

VIC. Come, confess—confess—

EVAD. What then should I confess? that you, that heaven,  
That all the world seem to conspire against me,  
And that I am accursed—But let me hold—  
I waste me in the selfishness of woe,  
While life perchance is periled—Oh, Vicentio,  
Prithee avoid Colonna's sight!

VIC. Evadne.

You do not think to fright me with his name.

EVAD. Vicentio, do not take away from me  
All that I've left to love in all the world!  
Avoid Colonna's sight to-day—Vicentio,  
Only to-day avoid him—I will find  
Some way to reconcile him to my fate—  
I'll lay the blame upon my hapless head!—  
Only to-day, Vicentio.

*Enter COLONNA.*

COL. Ha! my sister!  
Where is thy dignity? where is the pride  
Meet for Colonna's sister?—hence!—my lord—

VIC. What would you, Sir?

COL. Your life—you are briefly answered.  
Look here, Sir—To this lady you preferred  
Your despicable love! Long did you woo,  
And when at last by constant adoration,  
Her sigh revealed that you were heard, you gained  
Her brother's cold assent—Well then—no more—  
For I've no patience to repeat by cause  
The wrong that thou hast done her. It has reached  
Colonna's ear that you have abandoned her—

It rings thro' Naples, my good lord---now, mark me---  
I am her brother---

VIC. Well---

EVAD. Forbear! forbear!

I have no injury you should resent  
In such a fearful fashion---I---my brother---  
I am sure I never uttered a complaint  
Heaved with one sigh, nor shed a single tear.  
Look at me, good Colonna!—now, Colonna  
Can you discern a sorrow in my face?  
I do not weep—I do not—look upon me—  
Why I can smile, Colonna.                   [Bursts into tears.  
Oh! my brother!—

COL. You weep, Evadne! but I'll mix your tears  
With a false villain's blood.—If you have left  
A sense of aught that's noble in you still—

VIC. My lord, you do mistake, if you have hope  
Vicentio's name was e'er designed to be  
The cloak of such vile purpose—

COL. How? explain—  
I understand you not.

EVAD. Forbear, Colonna;  
Before your face, and in the face of heaven,  
I do resign him—let his vows to me  
Be razed from out the registry of sin,  
As they are from my bosom—I forgive him,  
And may heaven follow my example too!

COL. But I will not, Evadne—I shall deal  
In briefest phrase with you—Is't true, my lord,  
You have abandoned her?

VIC. Is't true, my lord,  
That to the King—

COL. The King?

VIC. And could you think  
That I am to be made an instrument  
For such a foul advancement? do you think  
That I would turn my name into a cloak?—

EVAD. Colonna, my dear brother. Oh, Vicentio!  
My love, my life, my—pardon me, my lord,  
I had forgot—I have no right to use  
Words that were once familiar to my lips:  
But, for Heaven's sake, I do implore you here—

COL. Sir, you said something, if I heard aright,  
Touching the King—explain yourself.

VIC. I will!  
I will not wed his mistress!

EVAD. (*with reproach.*) Oh, Vicentio!

COL. Whom mean you, Sir?

VIC. Look there!

COL. Evadne! ha?

VIC. Evadne!

COL. (*strikes him.*) Here's my answer! follow me!  
Beyond the city's gates, I shall expect you. [Exit.

EVAD. (*clinging to VICENTIO, who has drawn his sword.*)

You shall not stir!

VIC. If from his heart I poured  
A sea of blood, it would not now content me.  
Insolent villain! dost thou stay me back?  
Away! unloose me!

EVAD. Hear me!

VIC. Dost thou dare  
Still like my honour's shroud to hang about me?

EVAD. Olivia, hear me—listen to my cry—  
It is thy husband's life that now I plead for;  
I cannot hold his garment, but I know

Thou wilt have power upon him—Save, oh, save him!

VIC. Then must I fling thee from me—Now I am free,  
And swift as lightning on the whirlwind's wings,  
I rush to my revenge ! [Exit VICENTIO.

EVADNE, who has fallen upon her knees in her struggle  
with VICENTIO.

EVAD. God help my heart !  
Choak not, thou struggling spirit, in my breast,  
But leave me still the power to lift the cry  
That bursts within my bosom !—hear me, Olivia !  
Olivia, hear me !

*Enter OLIVIA from her House.*

OLIV. Is't Evadne calls  
Like one that with a frantic energy  
In fire cries out for life ?

EVAD. I cry for life—  
Vicentio's life—Colonna's life—Olivia,  
Look not thus cold and marble on my face—  
I do not come to chide thee. To thy love  
I will resign him all, but, on my knees,  
I beg thee to preserve him !

OLIV. Whom dost talk off ?  
EVAD. You have power o'er him that I no more possess ;  
Had he e'er loved me as he loves thee now,  
I had been stronger when around his neck  
I flung me to preserve him.—Oh, my friend !  
Colonna, maddened at my miseries,  
And I confess that I am miserable,  
Hath vowed a horrid vengeance, and even now  
He smote Vicentio !

OLIV. Heaven !  
EVAD. I prithee, look not  
Misdoubtingly upon me—do not ask

The touch of their cold corpses to convince thee—  
Oh! fly to save—thy husband—he will heed  
Thy supplication, though he scorn my tears—  
Why dost thou stand thus muttering to thyself?  
Hast thou not wings to save him?

OLIV. I am punished  
With dreadful retribution! from my heart  
All my base fraud is driven into my lips,  
And in the dire confession of my guilt  
Thou art avenged, Evadne!—To himself  
I dare not own it—but to thee reveal  
The vileness I have practised.

EVAD. Speak!

OLIV. Evadne,

I have foully wronged thee—yet, what I have done  
Was by a dæmon uttered to my heart.  
The hasty moments will not let me now  
Detail the base machinery of my sin.  
But with a letter—

EVAD. Ha! it breaks upon me!  
The light is blazing in my brain—the picture?  
Olivia—speak—the picture?

OLIV. When to me  
Thou didst commit that token of his heart  
In the wild rapturous tremor of thy joy,  
I seized advantage of Vicentio's coming,  
And placed within thine unsuspecting hand—

EVAD. That horrid image that appeared to fill  
My bosom with perdition, and did make me  
Unto myself so horrible—'twas you—  
It was my friend Olivia!

OLIV. The strong power  
Of an unhappy passion, stung to rage

By a false villain's counsels, drove me on—  
But the black sin was only half my own—

EVAD. What must be guilt, when it is such a hell  
But to seem guilty?—but I pardon thee—  
For after having plunged my soul in fire,  
Thou hast steeped me in Elysium.

OLIV. I myself,  
Will to the king, and bid him send his power  
To interpose between them—thou, Evadne,  
Wilt speak my guilt.

EVAD. Oh, my Vicentio!  
What a triumphant heart I bear to thee,  
I feel it trembling like a happy bird  
Just loosened to the air, with wings outspread  
To soar to its own liquid element!  
Love give thy swiftest pinions to my flight,  
Waft me to my unkind Vicentio,  
That I may play the tyrant for awhile,  
Chide him with fond reproach, until at last  
I throw myself all rapturous in his arms,  
Burst into tears of transport, and forgive him!

[*Exeunt severally.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

## ACT IV.

## SCENE I.

*A Street.*

*Enter COLONNA and VICENTIO, with their Swords drawn—  
passing across.*

COL. YONDER, my lord, beside the cypress grove  
Fast by the church-yard—there's a place, methinks,  
Where we may 'scape the eye of observation.

VIC. I follow, Sir—the neighbourhood of the grave  
Will suit our purpose well, for you or I  
Must take its measure ere the sun be set. [Exeunt.

LUDOVICO enters as they go off.

LUD. Ha! there they go!—the furies, with their whips  
Of hissing serpents, lash you to your fate—  
My dull and passionate fools—you fall at last  
Into the pit I have dug for you—the grave—  
You grasp the murdering hilt, while I, in thought,  
Already clench the glorious staff of empire.  
I hate you both!—One of you has denounced me—  
The other, robbed me of a woman's love,—  
And both would in the state employ their power  
To cut the eagle-pinions of my soul,

Nor let me perch upon the glorious top  
Of golden royalty where I aspire!—  
They have already entered in the grove  
Of funeral cypress that above their heads  
Hangs in pale augury—Now they are lost  
Amid the crowded trunks—and yet a moment  
And they will be about it!—Now, Vicentio,  
Thy fate is sealed—Colonna's arm is famed  
Where all are skilled in death, and on thy breast  
The fierce, impetuous soldier turns the point  
Where sits mortality!—Ha! who comes here?  
Evadne!—yes—my eyes deceive me not—  
'Twas happiest chance that led me to the field—  
She must be interrupted—let me think—  
I have it—

*Enter EVADNE.*

EVAD. For heaven's sake, whoe'er you are,  
Tell me which way they passed—doth not this lead  
To the eastern gate of the city—Ha! Ludovico!  
My lord, my lord—my brother, and Vicentio—

LUD. I know it all—and I shall thank the fate  
That made Ludovico the messenger  
Of such blest tidings to Evadne's ear—  
Your brother and Vicentio.—

EVAD. Speak, my lord—  
For heaven's sake, speak!

LUD. They are secure—thank heaven,  
Their purpose is prevented.—Prithee, Evadne,  
No longer seem a lily in the wind,  
But bloom in soft tranquillity again!  
Chase terror from those eyes, and beam, sweet maid,  
In still and peaceful loveliness!

EVAD. Secure!

My brother and Vicentio are secure;  
Their purpose is prevented—Oh, my lord,  
Do you not mock me with a sound so blest?

LUD. By providential circumstance, before  
Their purpose was accomplished, both were seized,  
And all their furious passions are as hushed  
As the still waters of yon peaceful bay.

EVAD. Ludovico, I cannot speak how much  
Thou has bound me to thee, by the holy sounds  
Thou hast breathed upon mine ear!—But, tell me, Sir,  
Where, how, and when was this? What blessed hand  
Between their wrath hath stretched its heavenly mercy,  
And saved two lives more dear unto my heart  
Than the strong pulse of life, thy words have waked,  
To such a rapturous throbbing!—Speak, my lord,  
To whom should I fall down, and from mine eyes  
Strive to pour out my bosom in my tears.

LUD. 'Twas I!

EVAD. 'Twas you, Ludovico?

LUD. The same!

Hearing Olivia's marriage with Vicentio,  
I saw the dreadful issue, and I flew  
With the strong arm of power to intercept them.

EVAD. 'Twas you, Ludovico—what shall I say?  
I know not what to tell you—But, God bless you!  
A thousand times God bless you!—On my knees,  
And at your feet I thank you. [She kneels.

LUD. They are about it!

[*Aside, and looking towards the grove.*

“ How beautiful she looks!—I never yet  
“ Beheld a fairer creature!—Oh, Vicentio—  
“ Did she prefer thee to me?—let it be so—

“ She yet will be mine own!—Arise, Evadne!  
“ If I had given my life, upon my grave  
“ You should not thus have thanked me—beautiful woman!  
“ The gaze of those soft eyes, and the soft touch  
“ Of those fair hands I dare to press in mine,  
“ Have given me boundless recompense—Evadne!—  
“ EVAD. My lord, I pray you——”

LUD. Beautiful Evadne!

Loveliest beneath the skies, where every thing  
Grows lovely as themselves—Nay, do not bend  
Your eyes, and hide beneath these fleecy clouds  
Stars beaming as the evening one, nor turn  
That cheek away, that, like a cold rose, seems  
Besprinkt with snow!—nor strive to win from me  
Those hands, which he who formed the lily, formed  
With imitative whiteness—I will presume,  
For your dear sight hath made a madman of me,  
To press my rapture here—

[Kisses her hand.

EVAD. My lord, I own,  
That you surprise me, and were I not bound  
By strenuous obligation, I should say,  
Perchance, you did offend me—But I will not!  
Accept my gratitude, and be you sure  
These thanks are from a warm and honest heart.  
Farewell—I do forgive—

LUD. You fly me then!

EVAD. I do not fly your presence, but I go  
To seek my brother's bosom—

LUD. And Vicentio's!

EVAD. You would be merry, Sir.

LUD. I have not cause—

Nor shall you, Madam—You would fly me thus,

To rush at once into my rival's arms—  
Nay, do not start—he well deserves the name—  
I know him by no other.

EVAD. Sir, I hope  
You will not revive a subject that has long  
Between us been forgotten.

LUD. What ! forgotten ?  
I did not think to hear it—said you forgotten ?  
Nay, do not think you leave me—in return  
For such small service as I have done to-day,  
I beg your audience—tell me what 's forgotten ?  
I would hear it from your lips.

EVAD. I did not mean—  
Forgive, and let me go.

LUD. What ? what forgotten ?  
Your heartlessness to all the maddening power  
Of the tumultuous passions in my heart !  
What ! what forgotten ? all the injuries  
You have cast upon my head—the stings of fire  
You have driven into my soul—my agonies,  
My tears, my supplications, and the groans  
Of my indignant spirit ! I can hold  
My curbed soul no more—it rushes out  
What ! what forgotten ?—me—Ludovico !

EVAD. I pray you, my good lord, for heaven's sake, hear  
me.

LUD. What ! to behold him like a pilferer,  
With his smooth face of meanless infancy.  
And his soft moulded body, steal away  
That feathered thing, thy heart.

EVAD. Ludovico,  
What may this sudden fury mean—you do

But act these horrid passions to affright me !  
For you to-day preserved him, did you not ?  
Did you not say you saved Vicentio ?

LUD. I will permit you shortly to embrace him—  
I will not long detain you from his arms—  
But you will find him grown as cold a lover  
As moonlight statues—his fond arms will hang  
In loosened idleness about your form,—  
And from those lips where you were wont imbibe  
The fiery respiration of the heart,  
You will touch the coldness of the unsunned snow,  
Without its purity.

EVAD. I now perceive  
What you would hint, my lord ;—doubtless you deem  
Vicentio hath preferred Olivia's love ?

LUD. If you can wake his heart to love again,  
I'll hold you for a sorceress—no, Evadne,  
You ne'er shall be Vicentio's—but mine !

EVAD. Yours !

LUD. Mine!—I have said it, and before to-night  
I'll verify the prophecy.

EVAD. I know not  
What lies within the dark and horrid cave  
Of your imagination ; but be sure  
I had rather clasp Vicentio dead—I see  
That you recoil with passion.

LUD. By the fires—  
Down, down, my burning heart !—So you would rather  
Within Vicentio's cold and mouldering shroud  
Warm into love, than on this beating heart.  
But, be it so—you will have occasion soon  
To try the experiment,—and then, Evadne,  
You will more aptly judge.

EVAD. Ha ! a strong glare,  
 Like the last flash from sinking ships, has poured  
 A horrid radiance on me—Ha ! Ludovico—  
 Let it be frenzy that before my face  
 Spreads out that sheet of blood—thou fiend from hell !

LUD. Well, my Evadne ?

EVAD. Dæmon, hast thou mocked me ?

LUD. Didst thou not scorn—didst thou not madden me ?  
 Didst thou not—Ha ! [Perceiving Colonna.  
 By heavens, it is himself !—  
 All is accomplished—and upon my front  
 Methinks I clasp the round of royalty !  
 Already do I clasp thee in mine arms !—  
 Evadne !—There—look there—Colonna comes,  
 And on that weapon flaming from afar  
 He bears the vengeance of Ludovico.

[Exit LUDOVICO.

*Enter COLONNA with a Sword.*

COL. Evadne, here !

EVAD. My brother !

COL. Call me so—

For I have proved myself to be thy brother.

Look here !—

EVAD. There's blood upon it !

COL. And there should be.

EVAD. Thou hast—

COL. I have revenged thee !

EVAD. Thou hast slain—

Villain, thou hast slain Vicentio ?

COL. I have revenged thee—

For any wrong done to my single self,

I should, perhaps, repent me of the deed ;

But, for a wrong to thee—Why dost thou look  
Up to the heavens with such a wildered gaze?

EVAD. To curse thee and myself, and all the world !  
Villain, thou hast slain Vicentio—thou hast slain him  
Who was as dear unto my frantic heart,  
As thou art horrible !—and 'tis to me  
Thou comest to tell it too—thou comest to bear  
That weapon weltering with my lover's blood,  
And stab these blasted eye-balls—Hide thee, villain !  
Hide thee within the centre of the earth !—  
Thou art all made of blood—and to the sun  
Art grown detestable—Vicentio !  
My lord ! my bosom's throb !—my pulse of life !  
My soul ! my joy—my love !—my all the world !  
Vicentio ! Vicentio !

COL. No more !  
He merits not thy sorrows.

EVAD. That fiend !  
That villain, for whose black, accursed heart  
Another penal world should be created !  
Invent, Omnipotence, some fiercer orb  
'Than has been yet created for the damned,  
And in its burning centre plunge the fiend  
That mocked me into blood !

COL. Thy passionate grief  
Doth touch me more than it beseems mine honour.

EVAD. Strike that infernal weapon thro' my heart !  
Here—stab me thro' and thro'—here—lay me dead  
Before thy feet—kill me—in mercy, kill me !—  
If thou wilt do it, I will promise thee  
Forgiveness in the other world for all  
Thy cruelty to me,—Strike, strike, Colonna—  
Not on thyself do I pronounce my curse,

I do recall my imprecations,  
 To pull them down on my own guilty head !—  
 'Twas I that murdered him—Ludovico  
 And I do share his life between us both,  
 And be it on our heads—Colonna, kill me !  
 Kill me, my brother !

COL. Prithee, my Evadne,  
 Let me conduct thy grief to secresy—  
 I must from hence prepare my speedy flight,  
 For now my head is forfeit to the law !

*Enter SPALATRO, with Guards.*

SPAL. Behold him here.—Sir, I am sorry for  
 The duty which mine office hath prescribed !  
 You are my prisoner.

COL. Sir, there is need  
 Of little words to excuse you—I was talking  
 Of speeding me from Naples, as you came,  
 But I scarce grieve you interrupt my flight,—  
 Here is my sword.

SPAL. You are doomed to death !

EVAD. To death !

SPAL. The king himself,  
 Hearing your combat with Vicentio,  
 Hath sworn, that who survived, shall by the axe—

COL. You speak before a woman—I was well  
 Acquainted with my fate before you spoke it.—

EVAD. Death ! must you die, Colonna ! must you die ?  
 Oh ! no—no—no ! not die, Sir,—Say not die—

COL. Retire, my sister—Sir, I follow you—

EVAD. Oh, not die, Colonna ! no Colonna,  
 They shall not take thee from me !

COL. My sweet sister !

I pray you, gentlemen, one moment more—  
This lady is my sister, and indeed  
Is now my only kin in all the world,  
And I must die for her sake—my sweet sister !

EVAD. No, no, not die, my brother—Oh! not die !

COL. Evadne ! sweet Evadne ! Let me hear

[EVADNE becomes gradually insensible,  
Thy voice before I go—I prithee, speak—  
That even in death I may remember me  
Of its sweet sounds, Evadne—She has fainted !  
I pray, you may not wake from lethargy,  
Till the last blow shall sever me from earth—  
Sir, I have a prayer to you.—

SPAL. It shall be granted.

COL. My palace is hard by—let some of these  
Good guardians of the law attend me thither.

[Evadne heaves a long sigh.

Ah ! what a heaving from the heart was there !  
How cold this cheek—for the last time I press  
A brother's kiss upon it—ha ! a tear  
Hangs on that eye-lid that 's scarce big enough  
To fall along that cold and marble face—  
Evadne, for thy sake, I am almost loth  
To leave a world, the which, when I am gone  
Thou wilt find, I fear, a solitary one !

[Exit, bearing Evadne, and followed by Guards.

## SCENE II.

*A Prison.**Enter LUDOVICO, meeting SPALATRO.*

LUD. Not here!—where is Colonna? who shall dare  
To tell me he has escaped?—

SPAL. Guarded he bore  
His sister to his palace, from the which  
He will be soon led here.—

“ LUD. If he had 'scaped,  
“ My projects from this teeming brain at once  
“ Abortively were ripped. But, as it is,  
“ His momentary absence doth become  
“ What I would speak to thee—I prithee here—”  
Spalatro, as I passed, a rumour came,  
Colonna's sword had but half done the work,  
And that Vicentio was not stabbed to death—  
If he still lives—but till I am sure of it,  
No need to speak my resolution,—  
Thou art his friend—

SPAL. Such I'm indeed accounted,  
But, save yourself, none doth deserve the name.

LUD. Then, hie thee hence, Spalatro, to inform me,  
If yet Vicentio breathes, and afterwards,  
I'll make some trial of thy love to me. [Exit SPALATRO.

*Enter COLONNA and Guards.*

COL. Conduct me to my dungeon!—I have parted

From all that bound my bosom to the world—  
Ludovico!—

LUD. The same!

COL. Come you, my lord,  
To swill with drunken thirst, the poor revenge  
That makes a little mind's ignoble joy?

LUD. Guards! I discharge Colonna from your care,—  
He is no more your prisoner—Hence!

[*Exeunt Guards.*

My lord,  
Such is the vengeance of Ludovico!

COL. What is a man doomed to the stroke of death  
To understand by this?

LUD. That I am his friend  
Who called me traitor!

COL. Such I call you still.  
LUD. Well then, I am a traitor.  
COL. There is here  
A kind of marvellous honesty, my lord.

LUD. In you 'twas nobleness to bear the charge,  
And yet 'twas glory to deserve it too.  
Your father was the tutor of the king,  
And loyalty is your inheritance—  
I am not blind to such exalted virtue,  
And I resolved to win Colonna's heart,  
As hearts like his are won!—Unto the king  
Soon as Vicentio's fate had reached mine ear,  
I hastened and implored your life.

COL. My life!—  
Well, sir, my life?— (*with indifference.*)  
LUD. Upon my knees I fell,  
Nor can I speak the joy that in my heart,  
Leaped, when I heard him say, that thou should'st live.

COL. I am loth to owe you gratitude, my lord,  
But, for my sister's sake, whom I would not  
Leave unprotected on the earth, I thank you!

LUD. You have no cause to thank me, for, Colonna,  
He did pronounce your death, e'en as he said  
He gave you life.

COL. I understand you not.

LUD. Your honour's death, Colonna, which I hold  
The fountain of vitality.

COL. Go on!  
I scarce did hear what did concern my life,  
But aught that touches honour——

LUD. Oh! Colonna,  
“ It struck me like a pestilence—it shrunk,  
“ It blighted me with horror!—The sirocco,  
“ If suddenly mid yonder summer sky  
“ From Afric's waste upon its wings of fire  
“ It rushed down to consume, would not have breath  
“ More withering than the sounds which fell upon me.”  
I almost dread to tell thee!

COL. Prithee, speak!  
You put me on the rack!

LUD. Wilt thou promise me,—  
I will not ask thee to be calm, Colonna,—  
Wilt promise me, that thou wilt not be mad?

COL. Whate'er it be, I will contain myself.  
You said 'twas something that concern'd mine honour,  
The honour of mine house—he did not dare  
To say my blood should by a foul attaint  
Be in my veins corrupted; from their height  
The mouldering banners of my family,  
Flung to the earth; the 'scutcheons of my fame  
Trod by dishonour's foot, and my great race  
Struck from the list of nobles?

LUD. No, Colonna,  
Struck from the list of men!—he dared to ask  
As a condition for thy life, (my tongue  
Doth falter as I speak it, and my heart  
Can scarcely heave) by heavens, he dared to ask  
That to his foul, and impious clasp, thou should'st  
Yield up thy sister—

COL. Ha!

LUD. Barter for life  
By horrid immolation of her charms,  
Give her to profanation!—“ Do not stare,  
“ Like one that with imperfect sense hath left  
“ Sleep’s natural attitude, and walks abroad  
“ In horrid slumber, with his eyes wide-stretched,  
“ As if he did commune with other worlds.  
“ If thou must needs be waked, I ’ll halloo it  
“ Into thine ear”—the king doth set a price  
Upon thy life, and ’tis thy sister’s honour.

COL. My sister!

LUD. Aye! thy sister!

COL. What! my sister!

LUD. Yes! do you start at last?—Your sister, sir,  
Evadne!

COL. Thou hast plunged into mine ear  
A sword of fire, and draw’st it to and fro,  
Athwart my brain—my sister!

LUD. Yes, Colonna!

The beautiful Evadne! “ I scarce thought  
“ That living man could dare—what dost thou gaze  
“ With such wild aspect on?—

“ COL. At red Vesuvius!—

“ Dost thou not yonder see the mount of fire?  
“ Bellowing, and sending from the abyss of flame

“ Its entrails to the stars—hast ever heard

“ It was the mouth of hell?

“ LUD. It is my lord,

“ The people’s superstition.

“ COL. Then I would

“ Their faith were right, that to the raging brink

“ Of the red bellowing crater, I might drag him,

“ And down the gulfs of sulphur plunge him deep

“ Into the billows of eternal fire.

“ My sister!

“ LUD. Hold, Colonna !”

COL. By yon heaven,

Were he not born with immortality,

I will find some way to kill him!—tho’ he had been

Bathed twenty fathoms in the anointing Styx

Of his damned royalty, I’d tear his heart out!

My sister!

LUD. Do not waste in idle wrath—

COL. My fathers! do you hear it in the tomb?

Do not your mouldering remnants of the earth

Feel horrid animation in the grave,

And strive to burst the ponderous sepulchre,

And throw it off?—My sister! oh! you heavens!

Was this reserved for me? for me!—the son

Of that great man that tutored him in arms,

And loved him as myself?—I know you wonder

That tears are dropping from my flaming eye-lids;

But ‘tis the steaming of a burning heart,

And these are drops of fire—my sister!

LUD. Now—

Do you now call me traitor? Do you think

’Twas such a crime from off my country’s heart

To fling this incubus of royalty?—

Am I a traitor? is 't a sin, my lord,  
To think a dagger were of use in Naples?

COL. Thou shalt not touch a solitary hair  
Upon the villain's head!—his life is mine;  
His heart is grown my property—Ludovico,  
None kills him but myself!—I will, this moment,  
Amid the assembled court, in face of day,  
Rush on the monster, and without a sword  
Tear him to pieces!

LUD. Nay, Colonna,  
Within his court he might perchance escape you,—  
But, if you do incline to do a deed  
Antiquity would envy,—with the means  
He hath furnished you himself!—He means, Colonna,  
In your own house that you should hold to-night  
A glorious revelry, to celebrate  
Your sovereign's sacred presence; and so soon  
As all the guests are parted, you yourself  
Should lead your sister to him—

COL. That I should  
Convert the palace of mine ancestors  
Into a place of brotheltry—myself!—  
Tell me no more, I prithee, if thou wouldest  
I should be fit for death!—

LUD. In honour be  
A Roman, an Italian in revenge.  
Waste not in idle and tempestuous sound  
Thy great resolve.—The king intends to bear  
The honour of his presence to your house,—  
Nay, hold!—I'll tell him you consent—he straight  
Will fall into the snare, and then, Colonna,  
Make offering of his blood to thy revenge!

COL. I thank thee for thy warning—'tis well thought on—

I'll make my vengeance certain, and commend  
 Thy wisdom in the counselling.—“ The hope  
 “ Of shedding his hot blood, hath made me cool,  
 “ And quench'd the fires of wrath !”

LUD. Then, hie thee hence !  
 And make meet preparation for the banquet.  
 I'll straight return, and tell him you 're all joy  
 In the honour of his coming.

COL. Let him bring  
 His purple robes to make a shroud withal,—  
 “ He shall be entertained, with wines of Greece,  
 “ And glorious sumptuousness—I 'll feast him high,  
 “ To make his blood the richer, with the which  
 “ I will make libation to revenge, and when  
 “ The deed is done—

“ LUD. We'll fling him in the sea  
 “ From off the battlements, and send his corpse  
 “ On the rough back of some propitious wave,  
 “ Yonder to Caprea's isle, the famed abode  
 “ Of old Tiberius, where he used to drag  
 “ The daughters, wives, and sisters of the chief  
 “ Of Rome's great senate to be sacrificed  
 “ To his decrepid villainy !—'tis there,  
 “ The sea shall give him burial on the shore  
 “ Already sacred to atrocity,  
 “ 'Tis fit he rot !

“ COL. Right, right, Ludovico !  
 “ I 'll hence this instant, and prepare for him—  
 “ And, prithee, haste him on to destiny !”  
 The rigorous muscles of my clenched hand  
 Already feel impatience for the blow  
 That strikes the crowned monster to the heart.

[*Exeunt severally.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

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## SCENE I.

*A vast Hall in Colonna's Palace, filled with Statues. - The Moon streams in through the Gothic Windows, and appears to fall upon the Statues. A Chamber-door at the back.*

*Enter the KING and LUDOVICO.*

LUD. THIS is the way, my liege. Colonna bade me conduct you to your chamber, while he went to seek the fair Evadne, and conduct her soft reluctance to your highness' arms.

KING. Ludovico, thou hast proved thyself to-day the genius of my happier destiny : Thee must I thank, for 'twas thy rarer wit did guide me on to heaven.

LUD. I'll send you there. (*aside.*)

KING. When first I heard Vicentio fell beneath the hot Colonna's sword, I do confess it smote me sore, but now 'tis told abroad that he hath passed all peril.

LUD. I am glad  
 His death does not conduct you to your joys—  
 Vicentio bears a slight unharzing wound.  
 That sheds his blood, but perils not his life :  
 But let him pass—let not a thought of him  
 Flit round the couch of love.

KING. Good night, my friend,  
 And prithee, bid Colonna swiftly lead her  
 To the expecting transports of my heart.

LUD. I will bid him speed her coyness.

KING. Hie thee, Ludoviço,  
 For every moment seems an age. [Exit to Chamber.

LUD. An age !  
 For you, nor minute, hour, nor day, nor year,  
 Nor age, shall shortly be. “ I do not think  
 “ In hell there is a time-glass ; if the damned  
 “ E’er ask what time it is—I’ve heard priests say  
 “ That conscience answers—‘ Tis eternity !  
 “ Henceforth, my liege, there is no time for you.”—  
 “ Tis now the dead of night—That sounds to me  
 Like an apt word,—for nature doth to me  
 Shew like a giant corse—This mighty world,  
 Its wide and highly-vaulted sepulchre,  
 And yonder moon a tomb-lamp! when the king  
 Lies dead to boot, all things will then appear  
 In a more full proportion.—Ha ! he comes !  
 My dull and unconscious instrument !—Colonna !

*Enter COLONNA with a dagger.*

Weicome, my friend, for such I dare to call you.—  
 The king ’s already to his bed retired,  
 Where death will be his paramour.

COL. I have heard

Vicentio was not wounded unto death—  
Would this were sooner known?

LUD. Why, my good lord?

COL. Because the king would not have offered me  
Such an indignity, nor should I now  
Tread into murder.

LUD. Murder—I had hoped,  
You would not on the threshold of the deed  
Stay tottering thus—Why, you look paler, sir,  
Than one of these white statues—One would deem  
It was a deed of sin, and not of honour,  
That you had undertaken.

COL. By yon heaven,  
I cannot stab him like a slave that's hired  
To be a blood-shedder! I cannot clench  
This hand, accustomed to a soldier's sword,  
Around this treacherous hilt, and with the other  
Squeeze the choked spirit from the gasping throat—  
Then kneel upon his bosom, and press out  
The last faint sigh of life! Down, damned steel!  
Fit instrument for cowards—I will play  
A warrior's part, and arm him for the fight!—  
Give me thy sword that I may put defence  
Into the tyrant's hand, and nobly kill him.—

Come forth! [Going to the door.

LUD. Hold, madman, hold!—what wouldest thou do?

COL. Bravely encounter him—not take his life  
Like a mercenary stabber.

LUD. Hast thou thought  
That he may be the victor too?

COL. My death  
Will not be thought inglorious.

LUD. There's some praise

In falling by the hand of royalty ;  
But when you are laid within your sepulchre  
And rot most honourably, then I fear me,  
A lesser shame will not befall your house  
For all the graven marbles on your tomb—  
Your sister—

COL. Ha !

LUD. Your sister will not find,  
When you are dead, a bulwark in your grave,  
Where will she find a guardian arm—thine arm  
Will be the food of the consuming worm,  
While in the hot embraces of the king—

COL. I did not think on that.

LUD. But I perhaps mistake you all this while—  
You have better thought upon the dignity  
He means your house.

COL. You do not dare—

LUD. I dare to tell you this—  
Who can forgive such injury as thine,  
Hath half consented to it.—How is it  
The glorious resolve hath cooled within thee ?  
Hath any thing befallen, that should have blown  
On the red iron of thy heated wrath,  
And steeped thee back to meekness.—Was the touch  
Of his warm amorous hand, wherein he palmed  
Her struggling fingers, ice upon your rage ?  
When he did tread upon her yielding foot  
Beneath the cloth of gold.—

COL. If I had seen it,  
He had not lived an instant !

LUD. When you turned,  
He flung his arms around, and on her cheek  
He pressed his ravenous lips !—’Sdeath, Sir, consider—

You pray the King of Naples to your roof,  
You hail his coming in a feast that kings  
Could scarce exceed in glory—It is blown  
Thro' all the city that he sleeps to-night  
Within your sister's bed ; and, it is said,  
That you, yourself, have smoothed the pillow down.

COL. Where is he ? let me see him who presumes  
To think the blasphemy.

LUD. Behold him here !

I, sir—yes, I—Ludovico, dare think  
With every man in Naples, if the king  
Should leave your roof with life, that he has tasted  
The fruit he came to pluck.

COL. No more—no more—  
He perishes, Ludovico !

LUD. That's well—

I am glad to see you pull into your heart  
Its brave resolve again—and if there be  
Aught wanting to confirm thee, think, Colonna,  
Think that you give your country liberty,  
While you revenge yourself!—Go, my Colonna—  
Yonder's the fated chamber—plunge the steel  
Into his inmost heart, and let the blood  
Flow largely, “ till the floor absorb it up.

“ That men hereafter journeying to Naples,  
“ May go to see the chamber, where the gore  
“ Shed by Colonna's hand doth rust for ever!”

COL. I'll call to thee when it is done.

LUD. Hark thee ! he 'll cry for life---and well I know  
The pleading for existence may have power  
Upon thy noble nature—then, Colonna,  
Drown every shriek with chaste Evadne's name,  
And stab him as thou criest it !

[Exit.

[COLONNA advances towards the chamber-door.

COL. I will do it!—

[He pushes the door, and finds, from his agitated condition, it is difficult to move.

I can scarce move the door—it will not yield—

It seems as if some mighty hand were laid

Against it to repel me.

(Voice exclaims) Hold !

COL. (Starting) It was only

My thought informed the air with voice around me—

Why should I feel as if I walked in guilt

And trod to common murder—he shall die !

Come then, enraging thought, into my breast

And turn it into iron !

(Voice.) Hold !

COL. It shot

With keen reality into mine ear.

A figure in the shadow of the moon,

Moves slowly on my sight, and now appears

Like a fair spirit of the midnight hour !

What art thou?

EVADNE advances from behind the Statues.

EVAD. Heaven does not alone employ  
The holy creatures of another world,

As heralds of its merciful behests :

But can make angels of the things of earth,  
And use them in its purest minist'ring.

My brother !

COL. How, my sister ! is it meet  
You watch the foot-fall of my midnight tread ?  
Come you across my purpose ?

EVAD. From my chamber

That to the great hall leads, I did behold you,  
In dreadful converse with Ludovico.—  
Your looks at the banquet did unto my fears  
Forebode no blessed issue, for your smiles  
Seemed veils of death, and underneath your brows  
I saw the silent furies—Oh, Colonna,—  
Thank Heaven, the safety of Vicentio  
Has given me power to watch your dangerous steps !  
What would you do ?

COL. Methinks it ill pertains  
To woman's humbler nature to pursue  
The steps of man, and pry into his purpose.  
Get thee to rest.

EVAD. Is that high front, Colonna,  
One to write Cain upon ?—Alas, Colonna,  
I did behold you with Ludovico,  
By yonder moon, and I as soon had seen thee  
Commune with the great foe of all mankind—  
What wouldest thou do ?

COL. Murder !

EVAD. What else, Colonna,  
Couldst thou have learned from Ludovico ?

COL. In yonder chamber lies the king—I go  
To stab him to the heart ?

EVAD. 'Tis nobly done !  
I will not call him king—but guest, Colonna—  
Remember, you have called him here—remember  
You have pledged him in your father's golden cup ;  
Have broken bread with him—the man, Colonna,—

COL. Who dares to set a price upon my life—  
What think'st thou 'twas ?

EVAD. I think there's nought too dear  
To buy Colonna's life.

COL. 'Twas a vast price

He asked me then—you were to pay it too—  
It was my Evadne's honour.

EVAD. Ha!

COL. He gives my life upon condition—Oh, my sister !  
I am ashamed to tell thee what he asked.

EVAD. What ! did he ?—

COL. Thou dost understand me now ?—  
Now—if thou wilt, abide thee here, Evadne,  
Where thou mayest hear his groan. [Going in.]

EVAD. Forbear, Colonna !

For Heaven's sake, stay---this was the price he asked thee ?  
He asked thee for thy life ?—thy life ?—but, no—  
Vicentio lives, and—

COL. (*Aside*) How is this ? She seems  
To bear too much of woman in her heart ;  
She trembles—yet she does not shrink—her cheek  
Is not inflamed with anger, and her eye  
Darts not the lightning !—

EVAD. Oh ! my dearest brother,  
Let not this hand, this pure, this white fair hand,  
Be blotted o'er with blood.

COL. Why, is it possible,  
She has ta'en the sinful wish into her heart ?  
By Heaven, her pride is dazzled at the thought  
Of having this same purple villain kneel,  
And bend his crown before her—She 's a woman !  
Evadne !

EVAD. Well ?

COL. The king expects me to  
Conduct you to his chamber—Shall I do so ?

EVAD. I prithee, be not angry at my prayer—  
But bid him come to me.

COL. What ! bid him come to thee ?

EVAD. And leave me with him here.

COL. What! leave thee with him?

EVAD. Yes—I implore it of thee—prithee, Colonna,  
Conduct my sovereign here.

COL. Yes—I will try her—

I know not what she means, but, hitherto,  
I deemed her virtuous.—If she fall, she dies.—  
I'll here conceal myself, and if in word  
She give consent, I'll rush upon them both  
And strike one heart thro' the other.

EVAD. Send him to me.

COL. There's a wild purpose in her solemn eye—  
I know not if 'tis sin, but I will make  
A terrible experiment.—What, ho!  
My liege, I bear fulfilment of my promise—  
Colonna bears Evadne to your arms !

*Enter the KING from the Chamber.*

KING. Colonna, my best friend, how shall I thank thee?  
But where is my Evadne?

COL. There, my lord!

KING. Colonna, I not only give thee life,  
But place thee near myself; henceforth thou wilt wear  
A nobler title in thy family,—  
And to thy great posterity we'll send  
My granted dukedom.

COL. Sir, you honour me.

My presence is no longer needed here.

(Aside) A word's consent despatches them!

[*He conceals himself behind the pillars.*

KING. Evadne!

Thou fairest creature that ever feasted yet  
My ravished sense with beauty, whose fine form

Is full of charms, as nature in the spring  
Is rich in rosy blossoms—I approach thee  
With all the trembling passion that untold  
Save by Ludovico,—

EVAD. Ludovico !

KING. Yes, my Evadne, to his trusty care  
I did commit my fires—nay, do not feign  
This pretty wonderment,—my sweet Evadne,  
Let me conduct you by the fairest hand  
That man hath ever touched—

EVAD. (*Retiring*) I pray you, sir—

KING. My lovely trembler, lay aside thy sad  
And drooping aspect in this hour of joy !  
Stoop not thy head, that like a pale rose bends  
Upon its yielding stalk—thou hast no cause  
For such a soft abashment, for be sure  
I'll place thee high in honour.

EVAD. Honour, sir! —

KING. Yes; I'll exalt thee into dignity,  
Adorn thy name with titles—All my court  
Shall watch the movement of thy countenance,  
Riches and power shall wait upon thy smile,  
And in the lightest bending of thy brow  
Death and disgrace inhabit.

EVAD. And, my liege,  
What will inhabit my own heart?

KING. My love !  
Come, my Evadne—what a form is here ?  
The imaginers of beauty did of old  
O'er three rich forms of sculptured excellence  
Scatter the naked graces; but the hand  
Of mightier nature hath in thee combined  
All varied charms together.

EVAD. You were speaking  
Of sculpture, sir—I do remember me,  
You are deemed a worshipper of that high art,  
Whose bright creation lighting on the dead  
And shapeless marble, turns it into life,  
And mimicking divinity can make  
Its breathing mass immortal!—Here, my lord,  
Is matter for your transports! [Pointing to the Statues.

KING. Fair Evadne!  
Do you not mean to mock me? Not to gaze  
On yonder lifeless marbles did I come  
To visit you to-night, but in the pure,  
And blue-veined alabaster of a breast,  
Richer than heaves the Parian that has wed  
The Florentine to immortality.—

EVAD. You deem me of a light capricious mood,  
But it were hard if, (woman as I am)  
I could not use my sex's privilege—  
Tho' I should ask you for yon orb of light,  
That shines so brightly, and so sadly there,  
And fills the ambient air with purity—  
Should you not feign, as 'tis the wont of those  
Who cheat a wayward child, to draw it down,  
And in the sheeted splendour of a stream  
To catch its shivering brightness!—It is my pleasure  
That you should look upon these reverend forms,  
That keep the likeness of mine ancestry—  
I must enforce you to it!—

KING. Wayward woman!  
What arts does she intend to captivate  
My soul more deeply in her toils?

EVAD. Behold! [Going to a Statue.

The glorious founder of my family !  
It is the great Rodolpho !—he was famed  
When heroes filled the world, and deeds that now  
Are miracles, were the unmarvelled growth  
Of every day's succession !—Charlemagne  
Did fix that sun upon his shield, to be  
His glory's blazoned emblem ; for at noon,  
When the astronomer cannot discern  
A spot upon the full-orbed disk of light,  
'Tis not more bright than his immaculate name !  
With what austere, and dignified regard  
He lifts the type of purity, and seems  
Indignantly to ask, if aught that springs  
From blood of his, shall dare to sully it  
With a vapour of the morning !

KING. It is well ;  
His frown has been attempered in the lapse  
Of generations, to thy lovely smile,—  
I swear, he seems not of thy family.—  
My fair Evadne, I confess, I hoped  
Another sort of entertainment here.

EVAD. Another of mine ancestors, my liege—  
Guelfo the Murderer !

KING. The Murderer !  
I knew not that your family was stained  
With the reproach of blood.

EVAD. We are not wont  
To blush, tho' we may sorrow for his sin,  
If sin indeed it be.—His castle walls  
Were circled by the siege of Saracens,—  
He had an only daughter whom he prized  
More than you hold your diadem ; but when  
He saw the fury of the infidels

Burst through his shattered gates, and on his child  
Dishonour's hand was lifted, with one blow  
He struck her to the heart, and with the other,  
He stretched himself beside her.

KING. Fair Evadne,  
I'll bid your brother chide you for delay,—  
Perverse, capricious woman!

EVAD. I'll not raise  
A tax upon your patience by regard  
Of this large host of heroes.—They are those  
Who fought in Palestine, and shed their blood  
For the holy sepulchre.—Two oaths they swore—  
One to defend their God—the other was,  
With their right arms to guard the chastity  
Of an insulted woman.

KING. Fair Evadne,  
I must no more indulge you, else I fear  
You would scorn me for my patience; prithee, love,  
No more of this wild phantasy!

EVAD. My liege,  
But one remains, and when you have looked upon it,  
And thus complied with my desire, you will find me  
Submissive to your own.—Look here, my lord,—  
Know you this statue?

KING. No, in sooth, I do not.

EVAD. Nay—look again—for I shall think but ill  
Of princely memories, if you can find  
Within the inmost chambers of your heart  
No image like to this—look at that smile—  
That smile, my liege—look at it!

KING. It is your father!

EVAD. (*Breaking into exultation.*)  
Aye!—'tis indeed my father!—'tis my good,

Exalted, generous, and god-like father !  
Whose memory, though he had left his child  
A naked, houseless roamer through the world,  
Were an inheritance a princess might  
Be proud of for her dower !—It is my father !  
Whose like in honour, virtue, and the fine  
Integrity that constitutes a man,  
He hath not left behind !—there is that smile,  
That, like perpetual day-light, shone about him  
In clear and bright magnificence of soul !  
Who was my father ?

(With a proud and conscious interrogatory.)

KING. One, whom I confess  
Of high and many virtues.

EVAD. Is that all ?

I will help your memory, and tell you first,  
That the late King of Naples looked among  
The noblest in his realm for that good man,  
To whom he might intrust your opening youth,  
And found him worthiest. In the eagle's nest  
Early he placed you, and beside his wing  
You learned to mount to glory ! Underneath  
His precious care you grew, and you were once  
Thought grateful for his service. His whole life  
Was given to your uses, and his death—  
Ha ! do you start, my lord ? On Milan's plain  
He fought beside you, and when he beheld  
A sword thrust at your bosom, rushed—it pierced him !  
He fell down at your feet,—he did, my lord !  
He perished to preserve you ! [Rushes to the Statue.] Breath-  
less image,  
Altho' no heart doth beat within that breast,  
No blood is in those veins, let me enclasp thee,

And feel thee at my bosom.—Now, Sir, I am ready—  
Come and unloose these feeble arms, and take me!—  
Ayé, take me from this neck of senseless stone,—  
And to reward the father with the meet  
And wonted recompense that princes give—  
Make me as foul as blotted pestilence,  
As black as darkest midnight, and as vile  
As guilt and shame can make me.

KING. She has smitten  
Compunction thro' my soul!

EVAD. Approach, my lord!  
Come in the midst of all mine ancestry,  
Come and unloose me from my father's arms—  
Come, if you dare, and in his daughter's shame  
Reward him for the last drops of the blood  
Shed for his prince's life!—Come!—

KING. Thou hast wrought  
A miracle upon thy prince's heart,  
And lifted up a vestal lamp, to shew  
My soul its own deformity—my guilt!

EVAD. [Disengaging herself from the Statue.] Ha! have  
you got a soul?—have you yet left,  
Prince as you are, one relic of a man?  
Have you a soul?—he trembles—he relents—  
I read it in the glimmering of his face;  
And there's a tear, the bursting evidence  
Of nature's holy working in the heart!  
Oh, God! he weeps! my sovereign, my liege  
Heart! do not burst in ecstasy too soon!  
My brother! my Colonna!—hear me—hear!  
In all the wildering triumph of my soul,  
I call upon thee!

[Turning, she perceives COLONNA advancing from among the  
Statues]

There he is—my brother !  
 Colonna, let me rush into thine arms,  
 And in thy bosom I will try to keep  
 My bursting heart within me.

COL. Let me behold thee,  
 Let me compress thee here !—Oh ! my dear sister !  
 A thousand times mine own !—I glory in thee,  
 More than in all the heroes of my name !—  
 I overheard your converse, and methought  
 It was a blessed spirit that had ta'en  
 Thy heavenly form, to shew the wondering world  
 How beautiful was virtue !—Sir,— (*to the King*)

EVAD. Colonna,  
 There is your King !

COL. Thou hast made him so again !  
 Thy virtue hath re-crowned him—and I kneel  
 His faithful subject here !

KING. Arise, Colonna !  
 You take the attitude that more befits  
 The man who would have wrong'd you, but whose heart,  
 Was by a seraph call'd again to heaven !  
 Forgive me !

COL. Yes, with all my soul I do !  
 And I will give you proof how suddenly  
 You are grown my Prince again.—Do not inquire  
 What I intend, but let me lead you here  
 Behind these statues.—

(*Places the King behind the Statues.*)

Ho ! Ludovico ! [EVADNE retires.  
 What ho ! there !—Here he comes !

*Enter LUDOVICO.*

Ludovico,  
 I have done the deed !

LUD. He is dead?

COL. He is as dead

As twenty stabs could make him—thro' his heart  
E'en as thou badest me, did I drive the steel,  
And as he cried for life, Evadne's name  
Drowned his last shriek!

LUD. So!

COL. Why, Ludovico,  
Stand you thus rapt? Why does your bosom heave  
In such wild tumult? Why is it you place  
Your hand upon your front? What hath possessed you?

LUD. (*With a strong laugh of irony.*) Fool!

COL. How is this?

LUD. So, thou hast slain the king?

COL. I did but follow your advice, my lord.

LUD. Therefore, I call ye—Fool!—From the king's head  
Thou hast ta'en the crown, to place it on mine own!  
Therefore I touched my front, for I did think  
That palpably, I felt the diadem  
Wreathing its golden round about my brow!  
But, by yon heaven, scarce do I feel more joy  
In climbing up to empire, than I do  
In knowing thee my dupe!

COL. I know, my lord,  
You bade me kill the king.

LUD. And since thou hast slain him,  
Know more,—'twas I that first within his heart  
Lighted impurity;—'twas I, Colonna,—  
Hear it—'twas I that did persuade the king  
To ask thy sister's honour, as the price  
Of thine accorded life!

COL. You?—

LUD. Wouldst hear more?—

To-morrow sees me king ! I have already  
 Prepared three thousand of my followers  
 To call me to the throne—and when I am there,  
 I'll try thee for the murdering of the king,—  
 And then—What ho, there ! Guards!—then, my good lord,  
 When the good trenchant axe hath struck away  
 That dull, and passionate head of thine—What ho !  
 I'll take the fair Evadne to mine arms,  
 And thus—

*Enter Guards.*

On yonder traitor seize !—  
 With sacrilegious hand he has ta'en away  
 The consecrated life of majesty,  
 And—

*The KING comes forward.*

What do I behold ? is not my sense  
 Mocked with this horrid vision ? “ Hold my frame  
 “ A little longer—and, you faculties  
 “ Of reasonable man, droop not beneath  
 “ That horrid phantom,” that hath started up  
 To make an idiot of me—is it not  
 The vapour of the senses that has framed  
 The only spectacle that ever yet  
 Appalled Ludovico ?—

KING. Behold thy king !

LUD. He lives !—I am betrayed—but let me not  
 Play traitor to myself—befriend me still  
 Thou guarding genius of Ludovico !---  
 My liege, my royal master, do I see you  
 Safe from the plots of yon accursed traitor ?  
 And throwing thus myself around your knees  
 Do I clasp reality ?

KING. Traitor, arise !  
Nor dare pollute my garment with a touch !  
I know thee for a villain !—Seize him, guards !

LUD. (*Drawing his sword.*)  
By this right arm they dare not—this right arm  
That to the battle oft hath led them on,  
Whose power to kill they know, but would not feel !—  
I am betrayed—but who will dare to leap  
Into the pit wherein the lion's caught,  
And hug with him for death ? Not one of this  
Vile herd of trembling wretches !  
[To the King.] Thou art meet alone to encounter me,  
And thus in the wild bravery of despair,  
I rush into thy life !

COL. (*Intercepts and stabs him.*) And there ! and there !  
That went into thy heart !—Art thou immortal  
Must I yet stab thee deeper ?

[*Ludovico falls.*

EVAD. (*Rushing up to Colonna.*) Oh ! my brother !

KING. Thou hast a second time preserved thy prince !

LUD. Colonna, thou hast conquered.  
Oh ! that I could,  
Like an expiring dragon, spit upon you !—  
That I could—thus I fling the drops of life  
In showers of poison on you---May it fall  
Like Centaur-blood, and fester you to madness !  
Oh ! that I could—

[*He grasps his sword, and, in an effort to rise, dies.*

“ COL. In that gasp  
“ The soul rushed to infinity.  
“ EVAD. Oh ! turn away  
“ From that affrighting spectacle ! the good  
“ Look awfully in death—the bad---[*With a broken shudder.*

“ KING. Evadne,  
“ We'll turn to living beauty, dignified  
“ And fair, illumined by the silver light  
“ Of the bright soul within ! Your sovereign owes  
“ His diadem to you, and what is more,  
“ The contrite spirit that shall make him fit  
“ To bear it on his head !—Henceforth, Colonna,  
“ Share thou my kingdom with me, and adorn  
“ My councils by thy virtue.”—Fair Evadne,  
We will repair our injuries to thee,  
And wait in all the pomp of royalty  
Upon the sacred day that gives thy hand  
To thy beloved Vicentio !

COL. And the nuptials  
Shall at the pedestal be solemnized  
Of our great father !

EVAD. Dost not think, Colonna,—  
Dost thou not think, his holy spirit spreads  
His wings around to shelter us from harm—  
And that amid the fleshless world he looks  
With nature's tender feelings on his child ?—  
Here every night, before I go to rest,  
I will kneel down, and say my orisons.

“ COL. And if the coldest heretic should chance  
“ To see thee kneeling there, with thy white hands  
“ Folded upon thy bosom, and thine eyes  
“ Bright with adoring love, he would not dare  
“ To call thy worship an idolatry.”

## EPILOGUE,

SPOKEN BY MRS. FAUCIT.

DROP SCENE.—*The Hall of Dramatic Statues.*

SENT hither by our Bard, no pleasant jaunt---  
In Epilogue a timorous debutante,  
I ask your favour, like a prudent elf,  
One word for him, and one word for myself !

Cut off, like Crusoe, from the social walk,  
With no Man Friday to keep up the talk  
Frown'd on by yonder monumental sages

(*Pointing to the Drop.*)

In marble. What an awful thing the stage is !  
Of Thespian Bards yon Alpha and Omega,  
From mighty SHAKESPEARE down to LOPE DE VEGA ;  
Each shakes his awful curls, and seems to say,—  
“ Surely the author *means* to damn his play ;  
What ! send an Actress out, the town t' implore,  
Who never spoke an Epilogue before !  
*Olivia* for *Evadne*, mighty clever !  
Woman for woman ! that is new, however !”

Peace, ye monopolists, on marble shelves,  
You want to damn all statues but yourselves.  
Avant ! “ I 've caught the Speaker's eye ” before ye,  
Rear-rank, Attention ! while I tell a story.  
PYGMALION once, to ape the Turner's trade,  
With curious labour carved an ivory maid,  
But as immortal grace each limb unfolds,  
He glows with passion for the maid he moulds,

## EPILOGUE.

And cries, (how vain were artists e'en in Greece)  
“ Come ! that 's a statue ! that 's art's masterpiece ! ”  
Long he adores her with a lover's mien,  
And thus, at length, petitions Beauty's Queen ;  
“ Oh, Venus, bid me taste of Hymen's bliss,  
“ And ‘ bone of my bone' make yon ivory Miss !  
“ Hush ! foolish youth ! ” (aside thus Momus sung)  
“ Leave well alone ! a statue has no tongue ! ”  
Vain was the hint ; the silliest of the Greeks  
Repeats his vow, and gains the boon he seeks.  
The statue woke to life, with eager spring  
**PYGMALION** changed his chisel for a ring ;  
And as no parent lived to thwart his plans,  
Of course no cross papa forbade the banns.

From that time forth, unwarmed by lover's breath,  
Statues, or bone, or stone, have slept in death.  
But if to-night, you bid *Eriadne* thrive,  
We hope to see the miracle revive.  
To Beauty's Queen the Grecian poured his vow,  
Our Poet bends to Beauty's daughters now ;  
Oh ! may they waken his dramatic wife,  
And, smiling, warm his statue into life !

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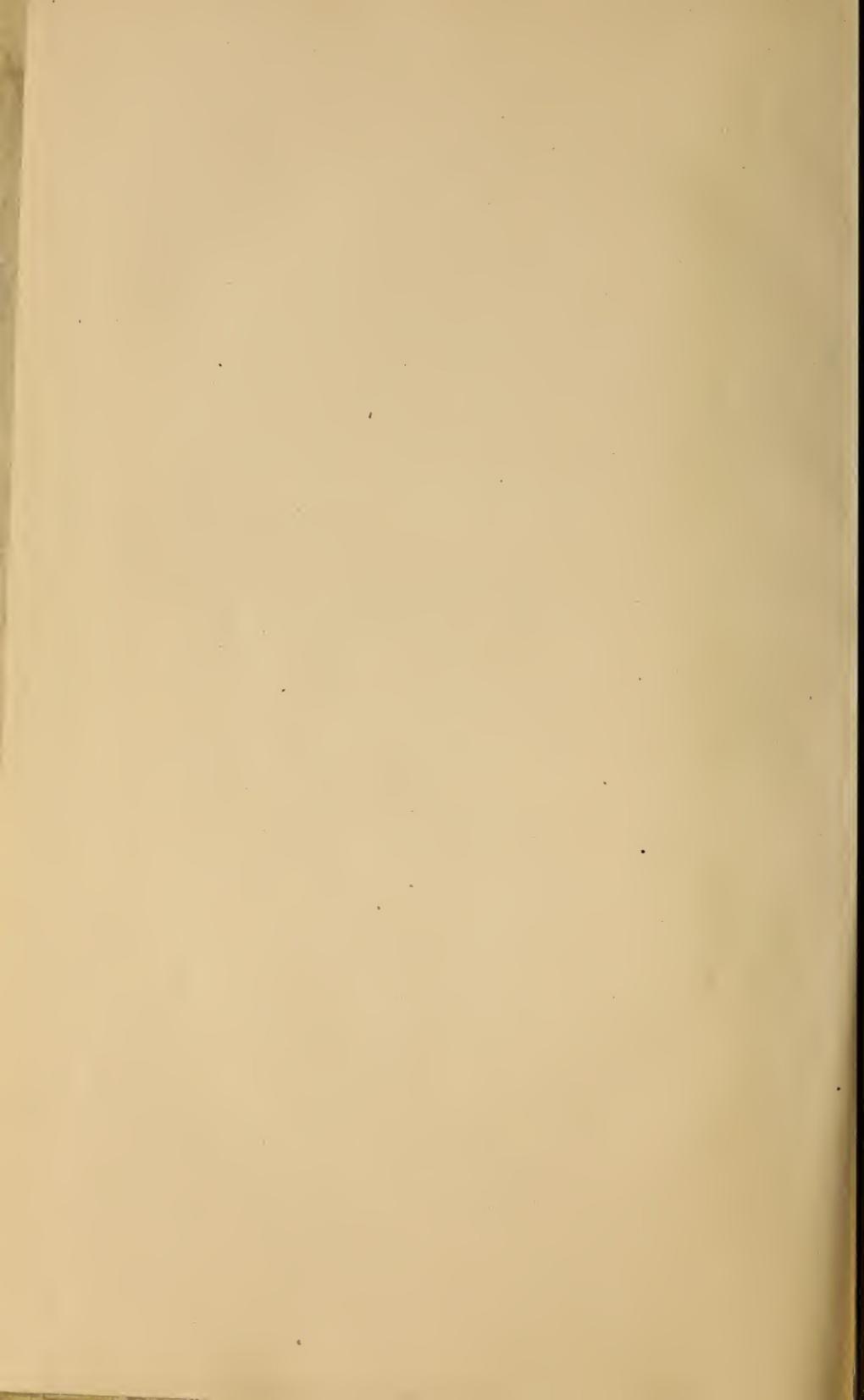
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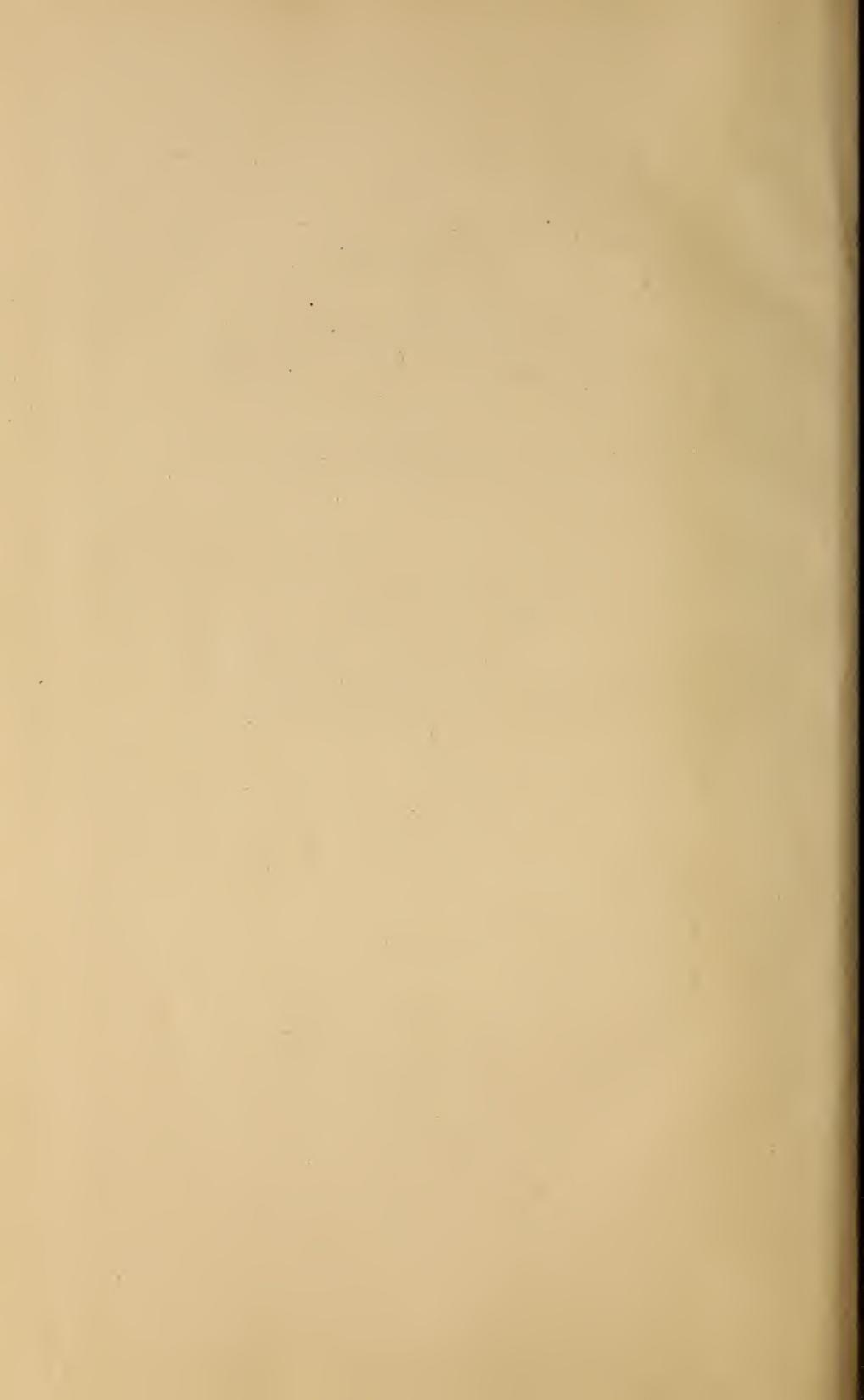
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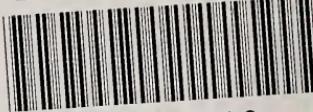








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